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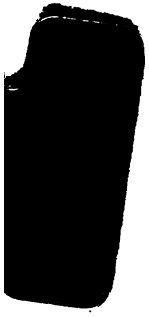

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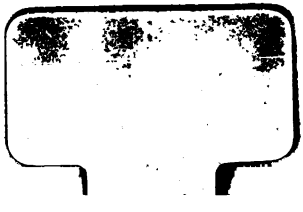

LETTERS TO A LADY.

BY THE

BARON WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT.

FROM THE GERMAN.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION BY DR. STEBBING.

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INTRODUCTION.

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT was born in Berlin, on the 22nd June, 1769. Having distinguished himself greatly at the University, he was early admitted to public employments. Such was his reputation in after years, for ability and virtue as a diplomatist, that he was successively ambassador at Rome, Vienna, and London. At the Convention of Peace, assembled at Prague, he appeared in the character of Plenipotentiary, and was one of the principal ministers at the Congress held in the Austrian capital. After a life of long and useful labour, he died at his favourite villa in Tegel, near Berlin, on the 8th April, 1836.

While the brother of this celebrated man, Alexander von Humboldt, was engaged in those pursuits of science which have rendered him one of the greatest naturalists of any age or country, he was himself employed in the study of profound classical and philosophic criticism. Notwithstanding his high official occupations, he found

time to examine, with the minutest attention, the grand models of art, in all its various forms. He became the intimate associate of Göethe, Schiller, and the other distinguished writers of the age. They appealed to him in all matters where the success of their labours appeared to depend upon attention to the first principles of composition, or on a reference to the laws by which Nature determines, as well as creates, what is beautiful.

Thus eminent in some of the noblest paths of human exertion, Wilhelm von Humboldt was one of those men, of whom we are always glad to cherish the minutest memorials. The letters of truly great men may generally be depended upon as expressing their real feelings. If we wish to learn the character of inferior men who have thrust themselves into notoriety, we can have nothing worse than their letters for our guide.

But there is a more than ordinary interest in these letters of Wilhelm Humboldt. We must tell the brief story of the circumstances in which they originated. While the writer was still a young man, and pursuing his studies in the University, he enjoyed a short vacation at Pyrmont, a favourite bathing-place. There he met with a clergyman and his daughter. They spent a few days together in the ordinary intercourse usual to such retreats, when tastes and habits of thinking make people, though strangers, agreeable to each other. When the

brief vacation which Humboldt allowed himself was ended, he returned to Göttingen; but neither he nor the young lady ever forgot their meeting at Pyrmont. It was not passion—it was not what is commonly called love—which had been awakened in their hearts. If such a thing be possible between two such people, it was friendship of the highest and most intellectual character, just modified by incipient affection. They never met again till they were in the decline of life, and then only casually for a few hours. Humboldt married a lady of great accomplishments, of whom he was devotedly fond, and who died only a few years before himself. The lady to whom these letters were written, also married, but we hear less about her matrimonial felicity than of Humboldt's. Her husband died after they had been married only five years. She was left with an ample fortune; but the period had arrived when the German States were thrown into convulsion by the progress of the French armies. Circumstances had led her to Brunswick. She resided there some years; and when the public treasury was nearly exhausted, she was one of the first to answer the appeal made to those who possessed any wealth. Her fortune was entrusted to the State. Affairs became more and more involved. The Duke of Brunswick, in whose honour she had placed her chief reliance, died at Waterloo, and she eventually found

herself a beggar. The state of her health prevented her making any active exertions for her support. She had but few friends, and her case was altogether one of equal hardship and sorrow.

Wilhelm Von Humboldt had now risen to the highest diplomatic rank, his noble character and influence were universally known. The feeling with which he had inspired our heroine's heart was as ardent as ever. She trusted that he might not altogether have forgotten their three days at Pyrmont. Twenty-six years had now passed away, but time has little to do with any sentiment, which has life and reality in it. There was reason to hope that the representative of a powerful state at the Congress of Vienna, might be able to accomplish something for one who had so generously risked her whole fortune in the public service. She at length summoned resolution to address him. Her letter received an immediate answer. It was such a one as might be expected from such a man. He could not effect anything with regard to her lost property; but he could fulfil the duty of a warm and faithful friend. The talents of his correspondent, her general tenor of sentiment and demeanour, had charmed him in their youth. This sentiment was re-awakened and increased, by the style of thought and feeling displayed in her letter. Obeying the dictates of his generous mind, he appealed to her friendship, and insisted, that she

should give up, for the moment, every other consideration but that which regarded her health. He did not believe that with a character like hers, she could endure to live in dependence. He did not think it good that any one should yield to such a state, while the power of exertion remained. It was, therefore, his hope that the time would come when she would be able to employ her abilities in securing for herself an honourable maintenance. But, in the meanwhile, freedom from care was altogether necessary; and he therefore desired that she should accept from him such a sum as would provide for her comfort and tranquillity one entire year.

The mode in which the offer was made, rendered the boon inestimably precious. It was effectual to the delivering of a noble and elegant mind from overwhelming distress. The only return for which Humboldt asked, was the continuance of the correspondence thus commenced. His character both as a man and a philosopher, is singularly exhibited in the wishes which he expressed respecting the kind of information which he looked for in the letters of his friend. He desired a minute description of familiar objects; of persons known in former times; of all, in short, which could help to give distinctness and substance to the thoughts and fancies which had been suggested to his own mind.

Some considerable interval broke the continuity of the

correspondence, but it was carried on to within a very short period of Humboldt's death. His afflicted friend long kept the letters as a treasure, the value of which was increased by their being peculiarly her own. Such, however, was the consolation, the improvement, and general good which she had derived from these letters, that she was, at length, induced to arrange them for publication. This task was completed but a little while before her own death. Few people can read the history of the correspondence, or the correspondence itself, without being thankful that they have been preserved.

LETTERS TO A LADY.

By WM. VON HUMBOLDT.

LETTER I.

Vienna, 3rd December, 1814.

I CANNOT express the pleasure with which I received early this morning your letter of the 18th of October. I always considered our meeting at Pyrmont as something more than the result of chance, and you err very much, if you suppose that you passed away from my memory with the fleeting images of my youth. I often thought of, and often inquired after you, but in vain; and concluded that you had married and long since forgotten me in the bosom of your family, in the midst of your children, and, if at all, remembered me but as one of the passing objects of your youthful days. I now learn with surprise how much less simple your life has been than I had supposed it, and must think that, had you communicated with me in your season of trouble, you would have found my advice of some value. Believe me, my dear Charlotte,—excuse this familiar address, only you and I read our letters,—men have not trust enough in their fellow men. I now learn for the first time how much deeper an impression I made on you than I ever imagined. Your handwriting, which I now see after so long an interval, speaks to me as from another world. I have the good fortune,—good fortune I indeed consider it,—

to be ashamed of none of my youthful sentiments, and to be now, believe me, as ingenuous as then. Every word of your letter has affected me; you have my entire sympathy, and thanks for the kindness which has thought me worthy of your confidence. Write to me then, if you think me worth the trouble, without reserve, with that reliance which I might, perhaps, have had a right to expect from you, had I ever seen you again. You are very wrong in saying that a woman's soul retains impressions more lastingly than a man's. I could prove to you the contrary from your own letters. Confess, (I will not reproach you,) but remember that twenty-six years have elapsed since our first short acquaintanceship, and that we shall never, it is most probable, meet again,—confess that I passed from your thoughts almost as soon as I passed from your presence. You have forgotten the promise which I made to visit you again, the non-performance of which has caused me so much grief. Now, I could yet point out the bank in the lane where we were sitting when I made it; I wished to pay you another visit, but was prevented by my youthful pedantry, which would not allow me to delay for a week my return to Göttingen. I feel certain that it was our destiny never to meet again in this life, and am only sorry that I have not had an opportunity of doing you some service; you may be quite assured that no painful sentiments would have disturbed us, had you communicated with me earlier. I have no apprehensions of that sort. You will understand after this confession the interest which I take in your welfare. It has occupied my thoughts all this day. I beseech you to trust yourself, for the present, entirely to my guidance. I have more experience of the world than you, and I know as well as you what a mind in your condition must require. Give up all your little plans, confide in me entirely, and you will do me the greatest favour in your power. What you need, what your health and your heart need, is rest.

The anxiety which you have experienced in seeking for the means of support has worn out both. You were, when I knew you, I well recollect, in very good health. Remain quiet for a twelvemonth, repose after the storms you have encountered, and your health will be as good as ever. This is the best counsel for your future plans. He who seeks when he needs, finds with difficulty. If a man can but get a season of repose, his affairs soon go straight of themselves. Time will direct both you and me as to your future plans. I consider it my duty to speak quite openly to you. Would that you had dealt thus with me! The duke's letters are very kind, and do him much honour; but it is very evident, as you may learn from your friend's letters, that he can give you no assistance. All these things you must leave to time and fate. Let it be my privilege, however, to procure for you a twelvemonths' rest—a season of repose from all your little anxieties. It is my earnest request, dear Charlotte, and I hope you will not refuse it. To do so would be a very false delicacy, and I need scarcely say that none but ourselves will know anything of the matter. I am not rich, but I can learn from your letters, and it increases my respect for you and the interest which I take in your welfare, that your wants are few and simple. I enclose you a bank bill, which, I know, will serve but for a few months; but I entreat you to send me a full and particular account of all you need, including the expenses of a course of mineral waters. Be quite certain that I never do more than quite suits my means; if ever your circumstances should change very much for the better, you can repay me; but understand that my wish is, that you should have a whole year's rest, in which, undisturbed by any cares, you may mature your future plans. I can judge very well, from the delineations which you have given me of your own character, to what I expose myself in making you this offer. I know how probable it is

that you may reject it with disdain and reproaches. But I persevere in my plan, for I am convinced it is the one most suited to your present position. Do not, dear Charlotte, suppose from this, that I should think it in any way improper for you to earn your subsistence by your own exertions. I only wish you to delay them till your health is re-established; in its present state they would destroy you. Believe me, if you should look to others, you would find no one answering you so unselfishly, and with so little pretension. Others would suppose that they did you a favour; in my case you are doing one. I will now leave this subject to give, as you requested, some account of myself. I married, as you say you have heard, three years after I met with you, and have had eight children, five of whom are now living. I married simply for love, and have been happier perhaps than any other man in my marriage. I have had the misfortune during the last two years to be taken away very frequently from my sick wife by the duties of my office, as is now the case. As you have heard of me so frequently, you have heard, no doubt, that I was for some time ambassador at Rome. I accepted the post only for the sake of the country, and, but for unhappy occurrences, should never, probably, have left it. The performance of my duties, which I consider a matter of conscience, has, since then, tossed me about in various directions. But this mode of life is little suited to my inclinations, which desire simplicity and repose. During the war I was at head-quarters, after that in England, and then I went to visit my wife, who was residing in Switzerland. At present I am attending the congress here, and she is at her estate, and is about to proceed to Berlin, where I shall meet her on my way to Paris, as ambassador, whither, somewhat later, she will follow me. My eldest son has been an officer in active service from his sixteenth year; he was severely wounded

some short time since, but has returned, I rejoice to say, perfectly convalescent. Besides him, I have another boy and three girls. My two youngest daughters have been brought up in Italy, and when they first came to Vienna, could not speak a syllable of German. I wish you could see them; they are two delightful little creatures. I had the misfortune to lose two sons in Rome, and one of my daughters died whilst with her mother on a journey to Paris. These are my outward misfortunes. Of the distresses of my soul, I may speak but cannot write.

Receive, again, my hearty thanks. I know not whether I shall ever see you again; I scarcely dare to hope it. I cannot form any picture in my mind of your present appearance. But as I still retain a vivid recollection of your former appearance, in spite of the brief period of our acquaintance, believe that my friendship for you was never, and never shall be fleeting.

Ever yours, H.

I return the original letters and the memoir.

LETTER II.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Vienna, 18th December*, 1814.

Many thanks for your delightful letter. You really esteem too highly that which is so simple and could not be otherwise. I have never forgotten you, never could forget you, but had no idea that you would hear anything of me, or recollect me if you did. Suddenly, you declare to me, that in spite of all the circumstances which have separated us, you have cherished the memory of our youthful meeting even more vividly and dearly than I. In the joy and emotion which your

declaration has awakened within me, I have and ever will answer you. Do not on that account withdraw the confidence which you have reposed in me; ever write to me as freely and trustingly as now; feel towards me as I feel towards you, and remember that your letters can never be too long or too copious. A woman's unreserved confidence is the greatest compliment and happiness which a man can receive. I have, of course, no sort of claim to this from you, in whose memory I must hold a very unimportant and ill-defined position. But I must tear myself from business, cares and amusements, in order to be able to become somewhat to you. And how delighted should I be, if you were to continue to confide in me the feelings of your outward and inner life as unreservedly as you have just declared the respect with which I long ago inspired you. Pray write to me frequently. You express yourself very naturally and very well, and I am as pleased as a child when I see your pretty handwriting, which I recollect so well of old. Above all things write to me of yourself. Your last letter contained scarcely a word about your health. Let me know whether your strength and spirits are improving. One favour I must especially request of you, which is, not to delay writing to me until you have received an answer to your last letter; be so kind as not to expect an equality of letters between us, for, as you know I have very little time at my own command, I can write but seldom, and then hurriedly; do not ask more of me. You will discover, perhaps, in this request, more of candour than is right; but I do not deny that I am very selfish, and am willing to lower the far too exalted place which I at present hold in your opinion.

You ask whether you should reside in Göttingen or Brunswick, and wish to be guided by me. That is a tender point with me. I am very glad when any one follows my opinion.

I should rather that you went to Göttingen, not only because I know that you will find it much pleasanter, but because it is much dearer to myself. You will think this very strange, and wonder why I should come to this decision; which, in fact, I can explain in no other way than that when I lived at Brunswick I did not know you, and that at Göttingen you were seldom out of my thoughts. I also love Göttingen because I lived there some time alone, and to live alone is to live in the midst of a thousand pleasant fancies. Salute the ramparts for me, and tell me what you think of the inhabitants.

Farewell for the present, my dear friend, and be no more a stranger. We are united in a wonderful relation. How many are there who, having met for a few days many years since, would care for each other now? But there are so few joys of this pure and tender nature, that I should be ashamed to withhold the confession, that your image will ever be inextricably united in my soul with all the feelings of my youth,—of that time, when the state of Germany and the world was so much more simple but so much more beautiful than at present. I have a great love for all that is past. That which has been, is as eternal and unchangeable as death, and, very probably, as warm and glowing as life. With these ideas I conclude.

Yours, H.

LETTER III.

Burgörner, April, 1822.

It is very long since I heard from you, and I am grieved to find that you have wholly forgotten me who think of you so often. Write, dear Charlotte, as soon as you receive these lines, to let me know how you get on. I have long been

anxious to write to you for some account of yourself, and the reason of your long silence, of which, perhaps, I am the cause. I write such short letters that you fear, probably, lest you should weary me by writing frequently. Direct your letters to Burgörner, near Eisleben; I am residing here on one of my wife's estates. Farewell, and send me an answer immediately. H.

LETTER IV.

Burgörner, April, 1822.

THESE lines follow so closely on the brief epistle which I sent you a few days since, for two reasons, one of which is, my eager desire to hear from you after your long silence; and the other, a doubt whether my first letter would ever reach you, as I am not quite sure that I know your right address. Confidently hoping that you have not forgotten me, believe me, I never forget you.

Yours, H.

LETTER V.

DEAREST CHARLOTTE, *Burgörner, 3rd May*, 1822.

I received your very agreeable letters of the 24th and 26th of April, and hasten to give you my most sincere thanks. They pleased me very much, and quite answered my expectations. I could never mistake your worth, nor lose my confidence in the stability of your sentiments. To doubt in respect of one whose noble and tender disposition retains for us a feeling of affection after many years of total separation,

would be base ingratitude. It is certainly a piece of singular good fortune for a man, that a woman's heart should continue to regard him with the holy and trustful sentiments of her youth; it is a piece of singular good fortune which I prize and treasure as it deserves. But I will confess, with as little pride as childish shyness, that I think I may be able to render your life both better and happier. If it is the lot of two people to possess a common mine of wealth, they must not leave it unworked, but should unite unreservedly in the pursuit of its treasures, for by such harmony alone can we obtain food for the sensibilities, and rest for the soul. As personal intercourse is denied us, let us establish and commence a regular correspondence. You will often have reason, I write it with shame, to exercise your kindness and patience in respect to my negligence, but recollect that although I am a bad correspondent, I always read letters with pleasure, and especially yours, not only on account of your delightful manner of writing, but of the great sympathy also with which I consider your temporal affairs and the life of your soul. Always write to me on the fifteenth, and I shall then receive your letters on a leisure day. If, however, you write to me in the intervals, I shall receive your letter with many thanks as a most estimable gift.

I was excessively pleased with the account you sent me of your garden, and the reasons which directed you in its choice. They are very characteristic of you, uniting simplicity and elegance. The first is in every way suited to your sentiments and position, whilst the last will beautify and adorn your life. I am pleased to hear that you seldom enter the town. Some visits of course you cannot avoid, and it is well to retain some acquaintance, especially as yours are, you tell me, old and well proved friends.

I can quite understand your wish to live in * * *,

which, if associated in your mind with some unpleasant circumstances, was yet the scene of your happy and serene youthful years. The neighbourhood is very beautiful, and, as you rightly remark, a great town offers, beyond all others, a freedom to live as you please, and grants you many indulgences at a slight expense, which a small town denies. I entirely approve of your resolution to continue your residence there. In the choice of your country abode, consider, above all things, your health; of this you tell me too little, although you know that I am continually anxious about that, your ease and welfare.

To conclude, I may tell you that I have been ill the last fourteen days of an ague, which, as I have been free from any sickness for years, I feel peculiarly burdensome. With the most unchangeable, the most hearty affection, I remain yours,

H.

LETTER VI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Burgörner, May,* 1822.

I shall, in the first place, satisfy your anxiety respecting my health, by informing you of its perfect restoration.

At the commencement of our correspondence, you thought that I wrote to you too seldom; and now I must make the same complaint against you. You promised in your last letter, that you would always write to me on the 15th of every month; this you have not done; and I have in vain expected a line by the last two posts. This silence makes me very uneasy, lest you should be ill, and sets me thinking on that and every other possible cause of your delay. Whatever it may be, I am very anxious to hear from you again, and have already read your former letters several times, each time being more delighted at

the wonderful unity which I discover in our sentiments. The world might call that vanity; might ascribe it only to the wish to see oneself flattered and honoured, if a sense of pleasure arising from these sentiments possessed the mind. But it would be a peculiarly unjust accusation against me, for vanity was never one of my foibles. Few people judge themselves so harshly; few are so stern in withdrawing themselves entirely from the praises of others, and so blame in themselves whatever is not praised. To a certain mistrust in my own power, I owe the most advantageous circumstances of my public and private life. But I willingly own that I very greatly esteem that nice delicacy of sentiment which touches so powerfully a woman's heart.

I could not be so foolish, however, as to imagine that you could still stand in a nearer relation to me. But if one be convinced by the true, natural and impressive language of your letters that your respect for me is deep and enduring, a twofold feeling is excited thereby, agreeably exalting the sentiment,—that of self-consciousness, and that of the profoundly noble mind which knew how to distinguish and to preserve these sentiments. Therefore, I greatly rejoice in this our correspondence, which to you may be of some use, and to me must be of inestimable value. Through all the varied changes of life, your image has shone upon me as a benignant light. I little thought I should ever hear from you again. We renewed our acquaintance in the most busy period of my life; but I am at length at leisure, and can indulge my desire of writing to you. During our long separation, it is most probable that many of our ideas will have altered or varied; but which, in our quiet interchange of thought, we can pleasantly explain.

You remind me, dear Charlotte, how close a treasure-house is a woman's heart, and ask my confidence. Believe me, I have an unbounded confidence in your true, faithful and tender

disposition, or I should not write to you as openly and freely as I do. Do you also rely upon me. Be quite certain that whatever you say to me will be secret as the grave. Be thoroughly also convinced, that I am sincerely anxious for your good; that I have always been so, and shall continue to be so. Trust me in this, even if you do not at once understand me. Leave the arrangement of our correspondence to me, and fear no disturbing influence. I would not force my opinions upon any one, least of all upon you. I am thoroughly convinced that you are not likely to mistake either me or my ideas. I know, indeed, and you have flatteringly assured me of it, that you would willingly and gladly, as you kindly express it, be instructed by me. I am glad that you have told no one of our correspondence. Let none know it; let not that which is so holy in itself be made common.

Farewell! Rely on my unchangeable affection.

Yours, H.

LETTER VII.

DEAREST CHARLOTTE, *Burgörner*, 1822.

I am about to make a request to you, by granting which, you will very greatly oblige me. I have an intense desire to hear the history of your life, the history of the development of your inner being. I have been led to wish this by the perusal of your former letters. It cannot be a very difficult task, for you have a great facility of composition; and your writings are exceedingly good, being natural, easy, and artistical; you have, moreover, a great command of language. I do not flatter; I simply express my convictions, deduced from your own letters.

If you should comply with my request, let it be in the following manner. Set down the events of your life very fully in chronological order. Write from memory, not from imagination. Go back to the days of your childhood and your youth, to your parents and their parents; and your ancestors before them, if you possess any knowledge respecting them. I wish you to speak in the third person, and to give other names to the places and persons whom you may have to mention. Let one name, however, remain; never blot out the dear name of Charlotte, for which, in common with Goethe, I have a great affection. Consider when you speak of yourself, that you are speaking of another, and apply blame and praise to your conduct, as though such were really the case.

I fear, lest, in complying with my wish, you should linger too fondly over your sorrows, from which I know you have already suffered so much. From this part of your subject, however, you are as yet far away; it will be your first task to give, and my happy task to receive, some account of the happy days of your childhood. Be satisfied, I repeat, that what you write will be seen by no other eyes than mine. I shall await your answer with much anxiety; and now, farewell!

Yours, H.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Burgörner*, 1822.

My last two letters which you have doubtless received, although they are yet unanswered, were simply intended to satisfy your scruples. I hope they effected their purpose, and I now repeat what I have said on a former occasion, that you will of course be guided entirely by your own feelings, as to

the manner and extent to which you may unveil before me your past life. In all your reminiscences I shall deeply sympathise, but must deprecate your tearing open any wounds which time has healed.

I thank you very heartily for the little sketches which you have sent me. The commencement of your narrative is exactly suited to my taste, but I wish that you had written some parts more circumstantially. Never think for an instant that you will weary me, and have no anxiety to get on too fast. We have time before us. You especially interested me by the description of your father's house, and convince me more and more that I was right in characterising your compositions as true, beautiful, and life-like. Pray continue them, and when you find them difficult or laborious, recollect the pleasure which they give to me. To think on the occurrences of our former days is to add to our future, and there is nothing in the world more interesting to man than man. One can never see or hear enough of one's own species: every new aspect in which we behold it is fruitful of new ideas. Details of its various phases always fill the mind with images which have all the semblance of reality. And this inclination to be amused with observing one's own species is very compatible with the apparently contradictory inclination to solitude. As soon as a man is surrounded by men, as soon as he enters the routine of society, a multitude of circumstances withdraw his attention from contemplation. But when a man who passes his whole life in contemplation, enters society occasionally, the scenes and figures of real life which pass around him, so far from distracting, but serve to nourish and people his thoughts. Not so, however, if he regards them simply in their apparent nature. When he returns to his solitude a thousand visions arise in his mind, if he is inclined to active thought, idealising all that he has seen in the material world. All moral

questions, all inquiries into the end and aim of life, respecting happiness and perfection, the present and the future, allow of a more manifold application, when one can illustrate the various views by examples drawn from life. In every man, however insignificant he may be in appearance, there is hidden a noble and thoughtful nature, which is the more noble as he is the more virtuous. It is in this manner only that we should study mankind, rising by this means from the low objects of the world, to a high and glorious view of humanity. In this consists the peculiarity of the great poets: ideal perfection often springs forth in their works from the accidental phases of nature and society. It is so also in history. Humanity stands forth more nobly and more gracefully in former ages, than amidst the petty events of the present. To possess a vivid idea of an interesting character is a gain worthy of a life, and brings with it a perfect acquaintance with the times and circumstances of the individual. I have ever had a particular liking for country clergymen, and a romantic attachment to their daughters. I felt this long before I saw you, but ever since I made your acquaintance, you have been the medium of my affection; I have loved them in admiring you. I consider that the best points in the German character are owing to the pastors' daughters; to their earnest and amiable dispositions, to their simplicity and talents, to their freedom from all the vices, and possession of all the virtues of a refined aristocracy. I have often expressed this sentiment, and frequently laughed at myself when I recollected that it was on your account that I thus lauded the daughters of country clergymen, of whom you are the only one I have ever known. But, as I have said, I had a presentiment of this which was clothed with reality as soon as I met you, who are to me as a half-seen picture, drawn away before my eyes had comprehended the whole; a waking vision. Therefore it is, that I am so much interested in your

early life, in your parents, and the home of your childhood. I wish to know whether there existed any foundation for my early visions; I wish to realise the world of my youthful fancy. Hence I am very grieved that I did not visit your father the same autumn in which I met you; I was detained in Dusseldorf by my friend Jacobi till it was time to return to Göttingen. Youth is sometimes seized with an absurd fit of regularity. For the sake of a few hours at College, which I should never have missed, I lost the opportunity, never to be regained, of possessing a vivid and lasting picture of your life under the paternal roof, of the whole colour of your existence.

You laugh at my not thinking you sufficiently minute, and think that you have included in your sketches every possible circumstance. But I must continue to make the same complaint. I wish your descriptions to be more precise, more individualising. I should like you to answer the following questions in your next letter, with great particularity: What was your mother's appearance? This may be easily imagined, but you have not described it, as you should do of all other persons also whom you may have to mention. Let me have a full account of her form, features, and manners. You have given some description of your father's house, but it is far from being sufficiently particular. Whether your house was surrounded by gardens, whether it joined the neighbouring houses, whether the scenery of the neighbourhood was pretty, whether your windows looked on to the fields, and whether there was a wide view from them, you have not said, and yet it is necessary that I should know all these circumstances before I can realise a lively picture from your description. Pray attend to this suggestion, or all that you describe will be but as an unsubstantial dream, and almost valueless.

You will be quite weary of my requests, but it was you yourself who offered to fulfil them.

I am here alone, and but for a short time: I wish you, however, to direct your letters as before, for, if I should have left, they will be forwarded to me at Berlin, to which I am about to return. Recollect the direction—Burgörner, near Hettstädt. Farewell, dear Charlotte! With unchangeable regard, I remain, Yours, H.

LETTER IX.

Tegel, 10th July, 1822.

I HAVE requested you before, I believe, to direct your letters to Berlin, which is a safer way than sending them to Tegel direct. At this place I passed my childhood, and the greater part of my youth, and love it dearly. It is by far the prettiest place about Berlin. On one side banded by massy woods, and on the other by picturesque hills; the view stretches far away in front over to a lake studded with islands. The house in which I am now residing is surrounded by lofty trees, which, when I was young, were young, but now are old. I am building a new house here, which is already half finished, and which, adorned with such pictures and marbles as I have, will be quite a pretty residence, leaving me little desire to visit the crowded busy town.

Many thanks for your letters of the 25th of June, and of the 3rd inst. I did not answer the first, in which you besought me so earnestly to write to you directly, because I knew that you would by that time have received my letter which I had previously despatched.

You need have no fear that I shall blame or oppose your inclination to solitude. It was very kindly meant of your venerable friend, C., to counsel you to enter into society, but

I am so far from being of his opinion that I am rather inclined to urge a more rigorous solitude. I was formerly accustomed, as so many always are, to consider what I liked, rather than what was suited to my disposition. But I think it much better for a man to love solitude, and if he do not love it, to learn to love it. That is my opinion.

I wish to thank you by-the-by for the account which you gave me of the little brook which ran through the garden round your house, with a little narrow bridge across it. Such little features as these present a whole scene to the mind's eye. But recollect that I am anxious to know what lay beyond the brook.

I thank you very sincerely, also, for the sketch which you sent me in answer to my question, by which I was much interested. How delightful it is to learn the views of a mind, which, however much it may sympathise with, must still be so unlike my own, on the men and things which have surrounded its path in life. In such views there may appear much that is defective, much that is unjust; but they are true and natural, and therefore interesting, for we ever look from the sketch to the individual. They are also in a high degree instructive, because one can by no means so represent objects to himself, and the worth, the impression, and the efficacy of things, are only measured according to a general rule, so that everything is viewed in connection with modes of thinking, character, education, and outward circumstances. One must always honour the views of individuals, however adverse we may be to their particular sentiments.' The character which you give of me is very, very kind and flattering; but I may add that I am certainly incapable of forgetting or giving up any whom I may have known, and rather follow the least trace which leads to the history of their past lives, with the greatest assiduity. I retain with an eager grasp my friendships

and even usual acquaintanceships; life, indeed, is at the best such a piece of patchwork, that a man does well to take especial care of all the pieces. It generally happens that those whom we recollect, retain a great similarity to our recollections; but even when this is not the case, I love to watch the changes and chances of the characters which cross the drama of my life, although I may feel no real or lasting interest in their fate. You have not thought of me in this way, retaining, as you do after many years, so faithful and strong a remembrance of me, without having received a single indication of my recollecting you in return. I need not say how large a space you occupy in my thoughts. I gladly fulfil all the requests which you have made.

You have repeated your wish that I would consent to your preserving my letters. Now you must know, my dear Charlotte, that I am a great enemy of old letters, and never preserve any that I can safely destroy, even though they contain nothing that can prove in the slightest degree disadvantageous to any one. A letter is but the voice of a man speaking to one afar off, and he has no wish that it should have a longer existence than words which are spoken and vanish. The impression which he wishes to give will remain, though the letter be destroyed, to be strengthened or altered by those which succeed.

As you, however, seem to value my letters so much, and ask permission to preserve them so earnestly, I cannot refuse. It is very kind and good of you to say that they are exactly suited to your wants. Of this I am quite sure, that I never write a line which I could not defend, and this makes me the less anxious about the fate of my compositions. My simple reason for requesting you to burn them was, as I have said, my dislike to the preservation of old letters. I dislike even

to read them. As you think differently, pray have your wish, which I am delighted to gratify, as you so seldom express one. Farewell, dearest Charlotte! let me have a place in your thoughts, and be sure that mine often follow you into your solitude. Yours, H.

You express wonder that amidst the distracting cares and occupations of my life I should have retained a love for enquiring into the minds of others, and the sensibilities of the soul. The truth is that this has ever been the work of my inner being, as to which all other occupations appear but as accidents, leaving me in undisturbed possession of myself. By such studies as this alone can a man hope to grow better. The growth of the mind of man, the ideas which fill and throng around it, have ever had for me an inexpressible charm. I made my first experiments on myself, and have attained, I believe, by a careful examination of my own experiences, to some knowledge of the character and tendencies of my spirit. Thus my endeavours have ever been directed towards two objects, the one to attain a perfect knowledge of every phase of life, and the other, to be dependent on no one, not even on fortune herself, but to stand firmly on my own vantage-ground, and to rely on my own resources. I have attained both these to a considerable degree. I am acquainted with all the joys of life. The simplest event of a cheerful nature, or bearing the promise of joy, has filled me with real and substantial delight. No man can be so thankful as I am, because none can have such reason to be thankful. Some never find happiness, and others when they find it know not half its resources, half its secrets. Another reason why I am happy beyond other men, is, that few men have so few wants as I; the satisfying of a want is but the stilling of a pain, and is opposed to all pure reposeful enjoyment.

To yield to another's wish, simply because it is another's wish, however opposed it may be to his own, is the duty of every man, and I should despise myself if I could not do so. Such a submission and self-conquest makes the disposition milder and gentler, but at the same time, strange as it may appear, firmer and freer.

LETTER X.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Burgörner, July*, 1822.

I thank you for your last two letters as heartily as they delighted me. The kindness and love which you show me do my heart good, and as I know that when you speak of me, you speak as you respect me and not as I am, I consider it a very pleasing additional proof and consequence of the amiability of your disposition. Your reminiscences of Pyrmont have delighted me very much; the more especially as my own mind is full, very full, of recollections of the happy time I spent there. My memory still retains many of our conversations. There was, in those times, I recollect, a great difference of ideas respecting poetry and human character, which always are, or should be, closely united. The one party preferred Klopstock, Stolberg, and all those poets and dramatists who adhere to the old rules; whilst the other identified itself with Goethe, Schiller, (whose only works were then The Robbers, Fiesco;) and all that class of writers, who, discarding the beaten tracks, struck out new orbits for themselves. I was undecided as to which to choose, and you, if I judge rightly, were inclined to favour the former class, at least you did not like Schiller's poems. I keep this in mind, and have much pleasure in observing, without any reference to our

individuality, the marvellous change which has taken place in our minds since then, in the period of a very few years. I wish, my dear Charlotte, to linger as long as possible over the days of your childhood, and, I will repeat, shall consider the careful prosecution of your undertaking as a peculiar favour. Let me know exactly what books you had read when a girl, that you had attained so great a power of thinking deeply and acutely. You have observed that any one could handle the subject of his own character,—with this I cannot agree. With respect to your proposition, "To treat every one according to his character:" your sentiments are different from mine, although I commonly do it for several reasons, one of which is, that it leads direct to one's object; another, that I am not called upon to reform men's characters; and a third, that to do so leaves them happier than another mode of treatment would, and it is a pleasant thing to see happy people around us. But I must confess I am very unwilling, and hinder it, as far as possible, that men should treat me according to mine. For what is this but to confirm a man's character, and to treat it as though it were unalterable? No man's character is without sin, and to treat it as though it were unchangeable, is to consider it irreclaimable. I have frequently been deeply pained by the attempts which some have made to humour my character; but I bear in mind, that such a pain as this is always healthful, and that perfect freedom from pain is not the highest good. I am very little solicitous to treat according to their characters those of my confidential friends whom I know to be men fearless of salutary pain, eager to know and to vanquish themselves; and by this means I probably appear to less advantage in the circle of my intimate acquaintances, than amongst strangers. It was with considerable pain that I discovered from a single expression that you were unwell, and think that you may be so still. Take care of yourself, dear Charlotte; take great care of your-

self, if not for your own sake, for mine. I am ever solicitous respecting your ease, happiness, and health. Women are both more and less fortunate than men, in respect to their occupations being of a nature which leaves them for the most part at full liberty to think of totally different matters. This I am inclined to call a piece of great good fortune. For they can thus live in their inner being, and enjoy communion with their souls, without being disturbed in, or distracted from, their ordinary labours. This is the chief reason why most women are superior to men, in the more subtle and extensive knowledge of themselves and others. But if the subject of their thoughts be sad, or even not perfectly free from any worldly taint, they are in danger of enduring a far greater amount of misery than men who, even involuntarily, are drawn away from reverie and contemplation by their active occupations. Do not suppose that I shall object to your decided inclination to solitude. Just the contrary: I was very much pleased by the description in your last letter, of your little country-house and garden; it is very agreeable to have some idea of the scenes and circumstances around those whom we love. Solitude is of great value to a woman, elevating her soul, so tender and earnest in itself, purifying and withdrawing it from all those little, mean and distracting pursuits into which women fall so much more easily than men. There are women also who love solitude, and live in it; who realise the idea that they seek no joy but that which flows from the depth of their own inner being; and that is the main requirement to render them objects of unchangeable interest to men, who are themselves capable of deep and profound feeling.

Very few people understand what infinite advantages exist in solitude, especially for a woman. If she be married and have children, her family circle is her solitude; if the contrary be

the case, her solitude is absolute; one in which she will actually live alone.

Prosperity passes away, leaving scarcely a trace of its existence; and so to speak, should not be called happiness, for it gives no lasting good. When unhappiness passes away, which is a great comfort of itself, it leaves deep traces behind, most healthful, strengthening, and purifying to those who know how to use them. It is a peculiarity of human life that when a man takes no thought of good or bad fortune, but only of duty, happiness is sure to prevail, however wretched his lot may originally have been. I have frequently observed, that women, married unhappily, have obtained by this means, a large amount of happiness. Farewell! Yours, H.

LETTER XI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, 2nd December*, 1822.

I have received your letters, and return my hearty thanks. To hear from you is one of the greatest pleasures of my life, and the more conscious I become of your amiable and faithful affection, the deeper is the impression which I receive from your writings. The remembrance of the past fits me for the enjoyment of the present, and I consider it one of the most fortunate occurrences of my life, that you should have given me a place in your thoughts, that you should continue to esteem my sympathy, and enter into my ideas, and I regard it as happy for yourself and a credit to me, that I retain those sentiments from which I can never part, till death. Your flattery would make me proud if I had any pretension to

the merits for which you give me credit. I am as conscious as any man of my faults and weaknesses, and know also, that it cannot be deemed a merit that fortune allowed me to discover excellence and worth in another, and that, when I had discovered it, I preserved it in the depths of my soul, and am unable to part from it. Such a happiness as this fortune granted me, when she gave me your acquaintance, your friendship, your esteem, and your confidence. I reckon it among Nature's best gifts that I never fear misfortune, even when it actually stands on my threshold; and, as it sometimes has done, attacks me very violently. I look upon it as an uncheerful but by no means as an evil companion. Still, thinking thus lightly as I do of misfortune, I prize inexpressibly all good fortune. Pure good fortune I consider that which proceeds directly from God, without the intervention of human efforts, and of this sort was my meeting with you, whereby my mind became filled with an image which it ever has and ever will retain, without losing any of its peace. However much I might disapprove of your actions, to imagine for an instant the possibility of such a thing, your image in my heart would ever remain pure and unprofaned. Your actions might be as those of other people, but would have no effect on the features which form this picture. For every man, however good he may be, bears within himself a certain ideal, which is more peculiarly himself, although he may sometimes be untrue to its principles; and to this inner and unchangeable essence must a man ever adhere, and pardon many offences, if they have not touched or proceeded from this deeper being. Thus I never dreamed of the treasure of love and faithfulness which you preserved for me so many years. How can I help being happy? Those sentiments which you foster for me, and those feelings which speak in all your letters, are the source from which flows our interchange of thoughts, the light and colours which adorn the union of our souls. From

this proceeds the great charm which I feel in perusing your biography. The more I learn of the influences under which you grew up, the better idea I have of the features of your soul, the realisation of which engages my willing and earnest attention. The pleasures of imagination I consider the greatest of which man is susceptible, preferring them in many respects to those of reality. In the latter there is always something disturbing, something distracting, but the former are ever pure, the results of the greatest and noblest thoughts of a man's mind; of the most earnest aspirations of his spirit. To live in the midst of such enjoyments as these, is real happiness, undisturbed by any outward troubles, because independent of all outward circumstances. But yet few men have a taste for these things, which are a dead letter to all who renounce sensibility and moral sentiment for the pleasures of reality. From such desires I have ever been free, and have had, therefore, the more leisure and inclination for the enjoyment of contemplation and reverie, without ever giving myself up to illusions or false enthusiasm.

Dear Charlotte,—You have for some time requested me to give you an account of my relations, and have now repeated your wish so gently, that I reproach myself for not having attended to it before. The near relations, you say, of men whom they admire, are inexpressibly dear to women, who love his children as part of his being, and his wife as his companion through life, in proportion as they make him happy. Knowing, as I do, the worth of the fountains whence these expressions flow, I thank you for them right heartily. I have delayed this subject from letter to letter, because I have usually come to my last page and last quarter of an hour without having reached it in due course. I will begin with my wife, as I do not remember whether or not you know much about her, and

pray you to pardon me if I repeat what you have already heard.

In her youth she was very beautiful, and although she has had eight children, appears still young. Her health has for some time past been very bad, but illness has neither made her irritable, nor destroyed her natural cheerfulness. Burgörner is her estate, and Tegel and the Silesian mine. Our marriage was a love affair, and had nothing to do with the negotiations of parents or friends. During the thirty-one years since our marriage day, we have neither of us caused the other an unhappy moment, and our love is the same now as then, except that it has gained a brighter and intenser hue. As we are both naturally cheerful, our union retains to this day a much more youthful character than could be expected. My occupations have separated us very much, but since I have enjoyed leisure from business, we have been almost constantly in each other's company, and the delight which this has been to me will prevent me from entering again into active life. Directly after my marriage I received an appointment, which I kept for ten years, and resided with my wife during that time in France and Spain. I will shortly notice the present state of my family, and mode of life. Of the latter it may be sufficient to say, that I seldom set foot in the town, but pass my whole time with my wife, either sitting within doors, or taking walks in the country. Of my family, as I before told you, I have lost three children, one in Paris and two in Rome; and we now have three daughters and two sons. Our eldest daughter dislikes to marry, and is glad to live with us, who are as glad of her company. Our other daughters are married, the second to a lieutenant-colonel Von Hedemann, with whom she lives very happily, and the youngest to Privy-councillor Bülow, who was my legation secretary in London, and now holds an office in the foreign department. She has a daughter almost

a year old, and lives a very happy and domestic life. My youngest son is at home under my own superintendence, and my eldest, who has married a very beautiful and amiable wife, is a cavalry officer at Breslau, and has as yet no children. You now know enough to form a tolerably accurate idea of my family and mode of life. I see few people besides my own family, and seldom visit any but very old acquaintances.

I must now conclude, bidding you, my dear Charlotte, a hearty farewell, and assuring you that I remain, with warm and unchangeable affection, Yours, H.

LETTER XII.

Berlin, Dec. 27, 1822.

It is with great pleasure that I sit down at my desk to answer your last letter, which delighted me, as everything does, which comes from you. I can scarcely be grieved that you were concerned at my long silence, as it has been the occasion of my receiving an additional letter; but must entreat you not to be anxious when you do not hear from me just when you expected. I am so seldom ill, that you should not imagine that to be the cause; and, as for any change in my affection, it is impossible with my character, and impossible from that deep admiration with which you inspired me. That I am sometimes dilatory in writing, proceeds from some accidental circumstance over which I have no control. Although I have no particular business of any kind, I am much busier than most men who are occupied; and I live by no means, as many others, so as to follow only my own pleasures and inclinations. My hours from morning till night, and I never go to bed before one o'clock, are regularly apportioned. With the exception of

dinner time, I spend only two hours, and that in the evening, with my family. I see very little company, and pass most of my time with my books and papers, leading a very studious life, and occupying myself with extensive inquiries in learning and literature, which often interrupt my correspondence with my friends, but with you less than any. I sometimes wonder, indeed, that I write such long letters to you as I do; the truth being, that my thoughts naturally turn towards you, and that I am urged to this activity the rather, because my letters occasion yours, which I read with so much pleasure,—which I can always find time to read,—at the sight of which all distracting thoughts vanish. One can always think, but it is not always so easy to write. You will recollect, dear Charlotte, that at the commencement of our correspondence, I complained of my want of regularity in writing letters,—you now find that I spoke the truth.

I am very glad that you are pleased with the short account which I gave you of my family, although you add, "I could have wished it had been fuller: still I rejoice at having thus gained some knowledge of your family, and am content." That is altogether in your style, and I praise you for that, as much as I must blame you for fearing lest you should have expressed your sentiments too freely. Remember that you have written your biography for me alone. Most nobly and sincerely have you laid open before me the first feelings of your youthful breast in my behalf; through your whole life you have preserved those feelings, and enshrined my image in your heart, without ever receiving through the whole time one sign of my recollection. All that you possessed to keep me in memory, were a few lines which I had written. This is enough to move any man's gratitude and admiration; but any man as sensible of its value as I am, would consider it as a piece of singular good fortune, or rather as an especial gift of Providence. There is no room

in this for the slightest shade of reproach, or the least breath of calumny. I will not allow you, you see, to reclaim what you have once bestowed. I will not be deprived of my possession by any little scruples on your part. If I err, my heart does not. I am not a slave to any narrow-minded ideas of propriety, current with the world though they be. If one is pure in oneself, an interchange of feelings with another, breaks no rule of right; for my own part (I cannot answer for the conscience of another), I can declare to you with a good conscience, every feeling of my heart which is pure and undisguised. You see, then, that as I have just said, I will keep what I have.

If you had not, very naturally I must confess, demanded it, I should have been silent respecting my family life.

Therefore, still again, I wish that you would not desire to obliterate a single line, or even a single word. I love to think on all that you have written to me, in which your feelings beam with such a pure and lustrous light. I wish, above all things, that our correspondence may give you pure unsullied joy. I carry it on for no other purpose than to strengthen and refresh those recollections, which I love more every day that I live, and to afford you happiness.

You will not wonder that I give you this information so late, as I simply give it at your especial request. It is very contrary to my disposition, to declare to any but the individuals themselves, the sentiments with which they inspire me. I am well aware that mutually to impart their joys and sorrows, and to live, as it is said, in one another, is usually reckoned an indispensable attribute of friends. Now, for my own part, I have experienced great joys and great sorrows, which I never felt inclined to impart to my most intimate friends. I care very little for the accidents of life; and, as far as respects myself, (not as regards others, God knows), I consider joy and sorrow as its least important circumstances. I know, thank God, that

there are better subjects for discourse between such friends as you and I, than the acts of the world that jostles about us. I act thus with my wife and children. They know, for the most part, nothing of my occupations; and my wife is so much of my mind in this matter, that if I tell her, for some reason or other, or she learns by accident, anything which I have done or may be doing, of which she was totally ignorant, she does not think it in the slightest degree strange. Friendship and love demand the most entire confidence, and with inquisitive souls there is no confidence. Farewell! With unchangeable affection I remain yours, H.

LETTER XIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, Feb.* 14, 1823.

You are quite dumb, and have been utterly regardless of the request which I made to you eight days ago, to break your silence. I have looked anxiously for a letter every post day. I should fear that you were ill did I not feel sure that you would at least have written a line to let me know, unless you were very ill indeed. This cold weather is very likely to have a bad effect on your health. I beseech you, therefore, to remove any anxiety by writing as soon as possible. I shall become very uneasy if I still have no letter. As for myself, I am very well, but very busy, for my brother has been staying with me a month; and now that he has returned to Paris, I have to work hard to recover the arrears of my various occupations, which I scarcely hope to do under a fortnight. Let this be the excuse for the shortness of my letter. As you like long letters, my last must have pleased you very much; it was very clearly written, and filled a whole sheet. Farewell! Write immediately. Yours, with unchanging affection, H.

LETTER XIV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, March* 14, 1828.

I have received your letters and their contents, for which I return you my hearty thanks. Nothing could be better arranged than this second part of your biography. The very pleasant character of the writing, and extraordinarily careful arrangement into chapters, make it as easy to read as a book. It will be better, I now think, that you should follow the arrangement of subjects, rather than that of chronology, which I at first recommended. I have the less scruple in setting you about this task, as I know that it must be very interesting to yourself, that you are kind enough to find a pleasure in obliging me, and that you would certainly employ your leisure time in the pursuit of some object—if not of this. But I should be exceedingly distressed if you really considered it a task, a tax on your time, and an obligation, when other business might compel you to leave it for a time, to excessive exertion. I wish you to do nothing but what is perfectly consistent with your ease, and accordant with your tastes. These observations have been called forth by the great length of your last papers; from which, however, long as they are, you will doubtless have learned that your fear that copiousness would make your undertaking endless, was without foundation. I can, certainly, no longer reproach you with excessive brevity, for it is easy to judge, from the writings themselves, that you wrote until you had exhausted your memory. You have overlooked nothing,—all the persons whom you mention are sketched to the life, and no features are wanting in the pictures which you have drawn. Your two grandmothers are very interesting characters, most excellent

women, of whose dispositions your own retains very marked traces. Of course the pictures of the simple life of a moderately prosperous family can offer no very striking points. And this makes it the more difficult to remember and describe its every-day events. For the efforts which, for my sake, you have directed towards this object, I give you my hearty thanks. Leading so simple and quiet a life as I do, I have been greatly charmed to find its exact counterpart in your narrative. I must praise this last part of your biography very much beyond the former, for its unbroken easiness of narration, for its vivid and picturesque descriptions. Although I read with much pleasure the observations with which you interspersed the early part of your narration, a narrative is chiefly charming as it passes before the reader with the semblance of reality, and is not disturbed or interrupted by the appearance of the author. In the present case—but you must not think that I declare war against all reflections, and forbid yourself every observation, (this is by no means my intention)—I find more to praise in the manner in which you have executed your task, than I should have found to blame had it been performed in another, for you would certainly have understood how to lend a charm to this also. But I must repeat, that a narration is better and more attractive in proportion as the narrator keeps behind the scenes, by which, however, he is not actually concealed, but is discovered in his narrative most distinctly and vividly. I was very pleased with the sketches which you have added, they are to the very life, and are a great addition to the reality and accuracy of the whole picture. I may mention, particularly, the description of the outward aspect of your father's house, which is peculiarly attractive. You have contented yourself with simply mentioning your mother's death. I pray you not to pass over this subject so lightly, but if, as is very probable, you have reserved it for another and more

fitting place, I should rather that you adhered to your plan. But if you do not intend to mention this subject again in your regular narrative, I wish you to make it the subject of a separate chapter, for it has an especial interest for me. The mischance in the matter of your house, which was so healthful, pleasant, and suited to your inclinations, has grieved me very much. I not only admit but share the dislike with which you now regard it, and perfectly approve of your determination to remove.

I am very thankful to find that you confide in my sympathy in the time of sorrow. It was my wish and intention to obtain a healthful influence over you, and I hope that I have obtained it. Let me, by means of this influence, alleviate your griefs. Again, I say, trust in me, who would be a stay and support to none more willingly than to you. Farewell! Be calm, and believe that I remain yours, with ever-enduring affection,

H.

LETTER XV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, March* 30, 1823.

I was very grieved to find the depression of spirits in which your letter of the 19th instant was written; but was also pleased to observe the more cheerful tone of the conclusion, which convinces me that our quiet intercourse has a beneficial effect on your mind; and this makes me the more anxious that you should not persevere in your intention of concluding it. This determination, to which I have no intention of yielding, can have only proceeded from great depression of spirits. It is very kind of you to wish, as you say, to preserve me from the burden of your sorrows; but should I not be

as uneasy at your silence, if I knew that it was caused by your reserve, as if I knew them in their full nature and extent. Be assured that I shall ever sympathise with your misfortunes, as I do in this case of your being compelled to give up your pleasant and convenient dwelling. But I should like to see you, my dear Charlotte, proof against these annoyances of outward life; meeting them with that cheerfulness which so much conduces to the peace of the soul. You will not, I hope, consider this a very bitter reproach—for nothing would grieve me more than to give you pain; but it is ever my habit to speak unreservedly to those whom I love, by which our friendship becomes stronger, firmer, and more independent of outward circumstances. Be not angry, therefore, at the open manner in which I address you, nor look upon it as the idle talk of one who is preserved by circumstances from similar annoyances. Pain is not dependent on outward circumstances, but has been ordered by God in such a manner, that the most favourable condition of life is no protection from its attacks.

In the course of my long and eventful life, my most cherished feelings have frequently been, sometimes for a long, sometimes for a short time, rudely shocked. I am by no means a stranger to your present feelings, and so entirely dependent are we on chance, I could meet every one of your distresses with a similar one. But, as you rightly observe, outward affairs engage very little of my sympathy. To exchange, for instance, the most agreeable for the most disagreeable abode, would be to me a matter of perfect indifference. I live almost entirely in my study; and, in spite of the fine weather, have not left it all day for more than a week, except to join my family circle in a neighbouring room. I have no wants of the kind which distress you, except the chair on which I sit, and the table at which I write. Any room is the same to me; and in mine you would find no luxuries, no mirrors, no sofa. What I mean

to say is, that things of this sort never trouble me; and I wish, although many very sensible people besides yourself, consider them of moment, that you would no longer submit to be grieved by such a thing as a change of residence. For my own part I cannot judge, even from your own showing, that you are so unfortunate in being compelled to leave a house which you liked, as in being unable to find another quiet garden-garlanded dwelling. The dampness of the walls of your present sleeping-room, frightens me very much, and is, of course, intolerable. I know, dear Charlotte, that in spite of all that I have said, your loss will be very great until you are once more comfortably settled; but under all circumstances, there remains to you resignation to bear what must be borne; the enjoyment of your own sweet and amiable thoughts; the society of friends whom you love; the assurance of a good conscience; and, permit me to add, our perfect friendship—my hearty sympathy. Every man should possess a certain strength and boldness with which to meet the misfortunes, which, as you have learned, may come upon him in the season of his greatest prosperity; but which, if he meet them courageously, gradually retreat, and leave his soul in peace.

I often think, dear Charlotte, that I may be very different from the picture which your thoughts may have formed of me. We can never judge rightly of a person's character whom we have never seen, with whom we have never lived. I wrote to you at the commencement of our correspondence, that you must take me as I was, and that such as I was I must be. I am peculiarly myself, dear Charlotte, in always retaining the same sentiments of love and admiration for you. But in writing to you, I must always express my real sentiments, and must pray you to excuse me when they are in direct contradiction to your own. How willingly I correspond with you, sufficiently appears, I think, from the long letters which I write

to you after the declaration, which you will remember I made on proposing this correspondence, of my dislike to writing letters, and of the very short and trivial communications which you might expect to receive from me. To return to your biography, I can only repeat what I have so often said, that your continuance of it will give me true pleasure; but that whenever I entreat you to do this, it is always on the supposition that it is accordant with your own inclination, which I know it is, and is no interruption to more important claims on your time and thoughts; I know how carefully you husband both, and respect you the more for it. Your observations on second sight have made me very curious to know more; and as I am entirely of your father's opinion, that the mysterious connection of all things is beyond our comprehension, I shall be no scoffer or disbeliever. Farewell, my dearest Charlotte! For my sake be comforted under all your distresses, and believe that no one thinks of you so often or so tenderly as your affectionate H.

LETTER XVI.

Berlin, 12*th April*, 1823.

MANY thanks for your little note, which breathes throughout your amiable disposition. Your words, "do not interpret too strictly the expressions of an afflicted heart, nor the despondency which is the consequence of heavy afflictions," have moved me deeply; you will never find my sentiments change. I anxiously await your next letter; from some expressions in your last, I conclude that better prospects are preparing for you.

H.

LETTER XVII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, 25th April,* 1823.

I had just sat down to answer your letter of the 9th, when, to my great joy, I received your letter dated the 20th. I feared that you would have waited for an answer from me before you wrote. I am very glad to find that you have left the house, to whose disagreeable inmates you had taken so great a dislike. You have at least found peace and solitude in your new abode. You are indebted to the friend who advised you to refuse the other house for a year's peace; for a year is a long time to pass in uneasiness. I had hoped, however, that you would not have taken possession of your new dwelling until the summer, as you would have found it pleasanter to live in the town during the winter. The description which you have given me of your various apartments, convinces me that they are very unfit for a winter residence, without great alterations in the walls, doors, windows, and such like, which the lease does not allow you to make, and which would be besides a great expense. I perfectly approve, however, of your aversion to the town. If it were not for my children, I would always live in the country, for even where the scenery is not pretty, one at least has an open view of the sky. And the sight of the broad heavens, whether on a dark or starry night, whether cheerfully blue, or covered with rolling clouds, or veiled in sombre grey, in the undistinguishable masses of which the eye loses itself,—under whatever aspect they may appear, whatever changes they may present, the sight of the heavens is to me a source of inexpressible delight. The aspect of the heavens affects the disposition of some men's souls: let not this be so with you; let the state of your spirit be dependent

on something firmer, something nobler than the variations of the weather or the seasons; although, from the very nature of your mind, you must rejoice when nature rejoices, be not sad at the appearance of her sadness. I never complain of the weather, and grieve when I hear others do so. I view nature as a great power, which blesses men, as they confide in the good purpose of all her developments, and look rather to the fulfilment of all than to each particular act. One of the great charms which I find in a country life, is the dance of the seasons, as they pass openly before my eyes. It is the same with the several periods of existence.

How much men deceive themselves when they think that they would willingly remain in either! The charm of youth consists in a glad and unrestrained effort to reach some yet unattained step in life, and if the young once became conscious that this period was to lead to no higher, they would suffer all the torments of Sisyphus; the pleasures of youth would be to them as the pains of hell. And old age is in reality but as youth, an entrance into life—an exaltation of the thoughts. Much as we love the scenes and circumstances about us, we feel that at the appointed time we shall leave them without repining. Without considering them in a religious point of view, there is something indescribably affecting at the thought of passing into infinite space; in the contemplation of which one becomes purified from all the petty sorrows of the world. It is an important consideration also that men crowded closely together become selfish. We must retreat from the crowd of humanity to the heights of nature, before we can view it in its true aspects, and feel for it the sympathy which it demands of our minds. By such means alone can a man learn to place less of his happiness in the hands of ever-changing fortune; to think less of pain, and more of his soul; to live less in the world of sense, and more in the universe of

thought. The fear of death is diminished, we learn to look upon it but as a mere transformation, as one of the natural consequences of the design of our being. These observations have been excited by the contents of your second letter, for which I give you many thanks. It is difficult to decide what to say, when we have to deal with such facts of personal experience as you relate.

That a beloved friend in the moment of dissolution may gain power over the elements! and in defiance of the laws of nature be able to appear to us, would be perfectly incomprehensible if it were not for the half-defined feeling in our hearts that it may be so. It is quite probable that a very earnest desire might give strength sufficient to break through the laws of nature. But there may be needed a peculiar disposition for the perception of a spirit, and we may often be unconsciously in the presence of myriads of disembodied souls. And this may be the reason why only so few people see, or why we so seldom hear of any having seen, spirits. Many of the accounts of the appearance of spirits to earthly eyes are fabulous, or may be traced to natural causes. The faith which men have in this sort of things is increased by their fear of the supernatural. But, on the other hand, many of these narrations may be true, and, indeed, it is very difficult to doubt the reality of even very supernatural events, when observed by many people of various dispositions, as was the case in the ghost-seeing at your house, since we might rather expect spectres to appear to solitary individuals. I have already observed that in a certain susceptibility to the perception of the super-sensual, men might have more of this direct communication with the spiritual world if their minds were not bound so closely to earthly things; if they were more frequently to hold earnest and pious communion with their own souls. Such was your father's feeling. Whatever it may be, he treats

the matter as it ought to be treated, neither with superstition nor disbelief. Your narration of this event has interested me very much, and I thank you the more heartily for it, as the quickness with which you have fulfilled my request, at a time when so many other things occupied your thoughts, is another proof of the friendship with which you regard me.

As the weather is very rough I am yet in town, but intend going, on the first favourable opportunity, to my little estate, Tegel, and from thence probably to Ottmachau, in Silesia, for six or eight weeks. Pray take care that you do not catch cold. Farewell! Yours, H.

LETTER XVIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, 15th May*, 1823.

I write to you from my little estate, which is already known to you. I have been here for some days with my family, although the weather remains very unfavourable. We have continual storm and rain, or at the best overclouded skies. But unpleasant as clouds are in winter, I love them very much in summer, when slightly veiling the clear blue sky, they breed a warmth and stillness, which have an earnest charm for earnest souls. Nature is as yet very backward, the oaks have but just begun to put forth their leaves, and only the very earliest trees, chestnuts, elders, and such like, have their full foliage. On the other hand, the blossoms of the fruit trees are very full and abundant. I have a pleasure in thinking that your garden is by this time in a very flourishing condition, and am only anxious lest you should be too much exposed to this changeable weather, for which your dwelling is very

unfitted. My brother's visit to Berlin, and a thousand other little circumstances, have kept me in town all this winter. The country therefore has now a double charm for me. I am very surprised that I should have so much delight in a country abode, as it is quite contrary to the life which my occupations have compelled me to lead. If I had never been accustomed to the country, or had enjoyed it continually, I could have easily referred my inclination to novelty in the one case, and habit in the other. I have neither passed my days altogether in the country and in solitude, nor been long absent from either, yet they have become as a second nature to me. During the many years which I passed without any regular occupation, I travelled, or lived in small towns. On entering into active life I was drawn from my rural solitude into the whirl of an extensive and mixed society. But even then I contrived to isolate myself from those around me, and was often alone in a crowd, an art which is soon learned by those who have thoughts sufficiently interesting to occupy their minds. I have ever regarded it as a blessing from Heaven, for which I could never be sufficiently thankful, and still regard it in that light, that I preserve in my old age this the desire of my youth. Many have considered it very philosophical and meritorious when they have observed me entering on business and giving it up with equal serenity, neither vexed at the prospect of toil in the one case, nor longing after my old occupations in the other. But I make no merit of this, which I think belongs to my character, because I know that it simply proceeds from my natural inclinations. I have always thought it would be painful to be occupied to the end about the outward things which might be passing around me, for all the events of this world are equally nothing to us at the point of death. But with the workings of the soul it is far otherwise. When sentiments and ideas have once become part of a man's heart

and mind, they are no longer dependent on the things of this earth, but remain with him as long as he exists.

It seems impossible to me that we should ever cease to think and feel. Although intervals of failing consciousness may occur, when the various states of our being may be no longer connected with each other through the power of memory; still the once conceived idea will work no less on the being and inner faculties of the soul. It is altogether otherwise when we undertake a labour connected with outward relations; with the actual business of life; and not out of immediate love to it, but from other considerations, as a means of support. In this respect I should myself have been able long to continue it, and have in fact done so, as long as strength allowed. Women are especially fortunate in this, that the work which they perform in this wise, although not altogether, is yet, for the most part, mechanical. It employs the head but in a small degree, and the feelings not at all; and hence the better, the higher, and the tenderer portion of human nature is left much more to itself than is the case with men. Thus men so much more easily become narrow-sighted, harsh, and crabbed, through their labour. This is never the case with women, even though circumstances and misfortunes oblige them to seek a maintenance by their work, and that in instances in which their early life was free from such necessity.

The least pleasant part of my pursuits has been that they compelled me to change my residence several times in the same year. I have no dislike to a new, but prefer remaining in an old abode, one charm of which is that I can see the various operations of nature gradually proceeding. The changes of the seasons have a charm for me, which I cannot explain. You will probably think that, in the perfect freedom which I now enjoy, I can arrange my time and pursuits as I please. The freest man has some obligations, it is said; and I find the

saying true. My present plans are to remain at this place till the 1st of June, and then to spend two months at Silesia, after which I shall most probably return to Tegel. I am very sorry that I shall not be able to visit, or, if at all, for a very short time, Burgörner. Farewell! Pardon me that I have written so much about myself. I speak to you as to myself; and besides, you know how willing I am that you should make yourself the subject of your communications. With the most hearty affection I remain yours, H.

LETTER XIX.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, 26th May*, 1823.

Our letters have crossed. I wrote to you without waiting for your letter, which, as it happens, you have sent earlier than usual. From my last letter you will know that the day of my departure from hence is very near. I have learned with great sorrow your indisposition and other distresses, which seem to oppress you more than usual. A change of residence has, indeed, been to you an evil! I flatter myself, however, that these cares will pass away when you become more accustomed to your new position, and the returning spring gives you pleasant occupation in your garden, with which, I am glad to find, you have become more reconciled than with the other parts of your establishment. My only fear is still for your health; for the preservation of which, in its present weak state, from the attacks of the raw winter weather, good thick walls are indispensable, and of such your house seems very destitute. Before the return of winter, consult some one who understands such matters, and have such alterations made as

he proposes. It would be an unpleasant thing for you to have to change your residence a third time; but even that would be better than to risk your health. Pray follow my counsel in this matter, dear Charlotte, and let me add an earnest request, that you will spare yourself, and not grudge yourself a little rest after so many distractions and fatigues.

The observations in your letter on the festival of Whitsuntide pleased me much, and were manifestly the expressions of your heart. It is to me, as to you, the sweetest and most glorious of the church festivals. Its holy signification, the descent of Divine power on men of like passions with ourselves, is comforting and exalting, and quite within our powers of comprehension, for every man may understand how he unites in his own person the spirit and the flesh. And even considered as a mere earthly ordinance, it is as a musical close to winter and prelude to summer. You say that you find it impossible to become used to pain, to regard good and bad fortune indifferently. This want of courage before the attacks of pain I have long observed in your character, and can well comprehend; it is the trembling tenderness of a woman's soul, which it would be wrong to oppose too roughly, or to harden. I will not attempt, therefore, to fortify you against the strokes of misfortune, but will rather wish it far from you. You may be sure that my hearty efforts tend to this purpose. The nature of men and women's souls is very different. To a man it is a shame to cower before the strokes of fate, to suffer his mind to brood over it with unavailing sorrow. To a woman this is most natural, and she turns instinctively to some other being for her support. A man, unless there be some defect in his spirit, has power to stand alone, and it is his duty to strive thus continually.

You have asked, very naturally, I must confess, whether I have ever experienced pain. Rest assured that I never

speak on any subject, with which I am not acquainted from my own observations and experience.

I have not fixed the day of my departure, but it is so very near that I shall not receive another letter from you at this place, and must request you to direct your next letter to Ottmachau. Wishing from my heart that you may soon be free from bad health, and all other distress, I repeat the assurance of my hearty sympathy and affection.

Yours, H.

Happiness and unhappiness lose all their healthful influences if they do not reach the sensibilities of the soul. As reality is ever poor, and shrunken by the side of imagination, in like manner our sentiments and ideas lose their charms when clothed in language. In the soil whence they grew, they increase and flourish, but removed from their native clime, they pine and die. Thus even sorrow preserved in a man's own breast hath a sweetness, which he would not willingly lose.

I never receive such comfort from others as from myself. I should consider inability to comfort myself under a misfortune a far greater evil than the misfortune itself. Women may need consolation from others, but a man should provide his own.

Compassion is a distressing feeling, and sympathy is very beautiful, but only to a certain degree.

Your sympathy I esteem of inestimable worth, but I am very far from wishing to feel that I need it. To merit anything which I do not possess in myself, is entirely opposed to all my principles. I have ever striven to need nothing which is not within the limit of my own resources. It is not, perhaps, possible to succeed perfectly in this, but if a man could attain this, he would also attain the heights of friendship

and love. For want in spiritual things is as much opposed to happiness as any material want. To supply a necessity is to alleviate a pain, and is but a negative good, whilst real happiness, both corporeal and spiritual, is something positive. He who needs friendship least, ever finds it in sweet perfection, and it fills his already happy breast with a superabundance of joy. He needs none for himself, and is blessed in bestowing his own undistracted love upon his friend. The condition of a perfect friendship between two beings is, that each should be sufficient of himself for himself. Then, if one is found wanting, the other has strength for both.

The common idea of the day, that in friendship it is necessary that friend should be a support to friend, is only true for second-rate men and second-rate feelings. In their mutual dependence they are both very likely to sink. This is my meaning when I speak of independence as being the noblest attribute of a man. Too many men, most worthy in all other respects, allow themselves to be deceived in this matter, and misunderstanding the aim and qualities of their minds, seek to conform them to the more susceptible souls of women. They do very wrong. A fair and pure spirit in woman, is only attracted by a fair and pure spirit in man.

LETTER XX.

Ottmachau, 12th July, 1823.

THE estate on which I am now residing, and which I have already mentioned to you, I have possessed since 1820. The scenery here is very beautiful. From the old castle, which is situated on the top of a hill, may be seen a complete panorama

of the Silesian and Bohemian mountains, and between these hills, at the foot of which flows the Neisse, and the castle, lie the pleasant fields, meadows, and woods, of which my estate forms part. I do not inhabit the castle, which only possesses a few habitable rooms, at present occupied by my children, but a very pleasant convenient house a little lower down the hill, from whence also a splendid view may be enjoyed. That I am in fortunate circumstances is very true, and you justly remark that this is rather the result of good fortune than my own exertions. It is perfectly true, and makes my happiness happier. Fortune's gifts please me more than the results of my own exertions. It is better to be born fortunate than rich. I have been, as you may imagine from my expressions, more fortunate than most men, I may even say that I have been fortunate up to this time in all my undertakings; many unwise acts both in my public and private life have caused me no trouble, and others which cost me very little care or consideration in their performance have been productive of the happiest consequences. I like to consider myself a fortunate man, but I always, I hope, remember that my good fortune may leave me at any moment, and am therefore more prudent than most men. Should great misfortunes attack me either in the shape of bodily disease or causes of great mental grief, I should suffer as other men, but in the midst of my sorrows should look back upon my former happiness, and lose not my inner quiet, which would not suffer a very severe shock. I learned very early in life to find contentment in my own thoughts and feelings, and now this self-dependence, this reserve, being so natural to my years, is doubled. I am certain, however, that this has not diminished the warmth of my affections, but that I can desire, on the one hand, without pain, and on the other enjoy with thankfulness. You must not think, therefore, that I blame an uneasy longing in others. Every one has, and must have, his

own peculiar principles; and, although I am so steadfast in my own, I am so far from disliking those of others, that I receive your expressions of earnest longing for my friendship with hearty gratitude. I hope that you proceed diligently with your biography, in which I take much pleasure. In ten or twelve days I leave this place, and hope to find letters from you in Berlin. With the most hearty friendship,

Yours, H.

LETTER XXI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, August* 11, 1823.

I reached Berlin the day before yesterday, and, on arriving here, was very much pleased to find a packet of letters from you. I perceive at the first glance that you are in good health, comfortably established in your new abode, and busily employed in the improvement of your garden. Next to the pleasure with which I received this intelligence, was that with which I saw a new part of your biography. I have not, as you may imagine, been able to find time to read it on the first day after my journey, but the passages which I glanced at here and there have given me a foretaste of the delight with which I shall peruse the whole. The division of years which you have followed in your narration, is peculiarly attractive, from the copiousness which it almost necessarily produces. Continue your undertaking with that diligence with which you have begun, and always remember that its copiousness never wearies me; for it is only from full and accurate representations that it is possible to draw true ideas of individual objects, and a sense of reality, of individuality, is the chief

charm of all narration. But I repeat what I have so often said and repeated, that I am anxious that you should not consider this as a task, but as a pleasant retrospect of your former life, in company with one who heartily sympathises with all its phases. I now perceive the value of the plan which you have pursued, of completing the account of your parents and the sketch of their lives, as well as of the influences and circumstances with which you were surrounded, before you turn to the growth and particular events of your own life. Without such an arrangement, the description of the former must have been imperfect, or interfered with that of the latter. All that you write bears evidence of its truthfulness, and is redolent of that greatest charm of all auto-biography—the character of the writer. You have said very truly, in your preface, that to consider, as you now do, your past life is to live it over again; but the impressions of realities and their reminiscences are very different.

The pain of distressing circumstances is doubled by the gloom which shrouds their consequences. Our reminiscences are not so, and the pain is much less: the blow which strikes us at the present with its full force, loses half its strength in the mass of the future. And surely there must be something most beneficial in this inquiry into the past, in this inquiry into our former sentiments and ideas. Well as a man may know himself, every time he delineates his own character afresh, the picture is clearer, better defined; its features are more natural, nearer the truth. Be not afraid that I shall love your character the less, by knowing it more thoroughly. In this respect especially, you have no need to crave my kind judgment. Copiousness preserves one from misunderstanding, error, and false judgment. You are very right in thinking that there is more in a life than its actions, and that men are wrong in judging of a man by his last deeds. The Power

which searches all hearts looks to the intentions, the yearnings, the inner workings of the soul, and this also is the aim of history. Every connected narrative which seeks to connect causes with events, whether they be the events of a world or of a private life, is history. The wish to know the circumstances of another's life proceeds with but very few men from the desire to be self-constituted judges, and least of all with me. The observation of an interesting condition of mind, the inquiry into its causes and results, is peculiarly attractive to the spectator, although he may have no wish or intention to constitute himself judge; and he finds, if this phase of character attracts his sympathy and attention, general laws in the particular case, humanity in man. I am convinced, and indeed have experienced already, that your narration will often, without your wishing, without your imagining it, tend to confirm, to feed and to enlarge, the opinion which I have formed from the personal intercourse which we enjoyed so many years ago, from your subsequent written communications, and my own ever-undying and unchangeable sympathy with all that concerns you ever since. Continue your work courageously, and never fear that you will be misunderstood.

LETTER XXII.

September 10, 1823.

ALLOW me to repeat my hearty thanks for the portion of your biography which I received last, and have now read over with great attention and pleasure. I chose my most leisure time for the consideration of your sketches, and have examined them individually with great exactness. You must not accuse

me of affectation, when I say that they have charmed me exceedingly. The acts and thoughts of a child, how unimportant! The growth, the development which leads to these, how interesting! The positive act or idea is of no value as a lesson; but, from the gradual expansion of such causative ideas and feelings, much important instruction may be drawn. And, for this purpose, the life of a child is better than that of an adult, for it is less confused with outward circumstances, more complete in itself, and more fitted for the purposes of comparison. You, for instance, have drawn your character as a child, and a natural connection arises in the mind between that, the characters of your parents, and your own character in latter years. I never lose sight of these three points during the perusal of your history. For it may be fairly determined, that those characteristics of your disposition when a child, which have been through life and now are your characteristics,—it may be fairly determined, I say, that they are essential properties of your spirit. You appear as a child to have been remarkably attentive to the world moving around you; but, instead of being, as might have been expected, drawn into its vortex, to have drawn from it materials for a world of your own construction. I cannot doubt for an instant that you owe your inner nature to your father, in whom it was present in so different a manner only as it had sprung from different sources. It is not easy to judge respecting the opposite dispositions of your parents, but a decision according to the world's standard must be in favour of your mother. She was active, practical, thoughtful, but yet most truly amiable and loving. Hers was certainly the stronger character of the two. In the character of your father one misses the right idea of life, which may be looked for in a man still more than in a woman. But it is right to be cautious in condemning. It is very manifest that we cannot penetrate the mysteries of his inner nature, which

it is very probable he never found an opportunity to unfold without reserve. He could not enter into any communion of soul with his wife, as he might have done in later years, and probably did, to a certain degree, with you. But it is seldom that a father seeks sympathy from his grown-up daughters. The ruling trait of your father's character, his disposition to reverie, was mingled with something which, if it cannot be called corporeal, was yet independent of the will, and even distinct from all consciousness.

I confess that, for my own part, I have no love for this inner and independent life of the spirit; I like to have a clear and well-defined consciousness, to have no thoughts but those which proceed from, and obey my own free will. I possess partly as the gift of nature, and partly as the result of habits begun very early in life, a great power and command over myself; and it is therefore painful to me even to imagine my mind in the condition of your father's, perpetually in the region of dreams, and moved by forces over which, although innate, he had no control. I am very timid of passing any judgment on your father, as I must ever be in respect to those who are nearly connected with you; but I must say that both your parents should have paid greater and more constant attention to you than they did. Your mother was so different in character, that she could influence you but very little, and so partial in her views, that her only aim was to make you exactly similar to herself. Because this could not be, and because your father interfered to protect you from her unreasonable demands, she left you more to yourself than is at all good for a child. It might have been very beneficial if your mother had been able to instil some of her practical nature into your tender, reserved, contemplative nature. And yet what a blind supposition, what an idle speech is this! Although a more perfect education might have made your mind and soul more perfect, you are so

good as you are, that there is little room left for grumbling. If you had gained more of your mother's character, you might have struggled successfully with many obstacles in life, have been spared many, and borne all with firmness, energy, and trustfulness. But much of your spirit would then have been unimproved and undeveloped; and if happiness, I use the word in its common signification of freedom from pain or of positive enjoyment—if happiness, I say, comes into collision with the wealthier, the fairer treasures of the spirit, so that one or the other must be neglected, let the corporeal be as dust, in comparison with the gold of the spiritual. Your Aunt L—— must have had much influence on your education. Her character is most amiable, and much more like your own than is your mother's. I was very pleasantly surprised to find mention in the last part of your biography of Dohm and his wife. Whilst I was residing in Berlin, before I went to the university, he was for some time my tutor. I then knew little or nothing of his wife; but some time after, in the same year that he was made ambassador to A——, and that I first met with my dear Charlotte at Pyrmont, I made a tour up the Rhine, and stayed with him above a week. As Dohm was usually very busy in his study, I had a good deal of his wife's company, which I found very agreeable, for she was, as you observe, of very pleasing appearance, and most charming disposition. Since that time I have never seen her, and met him but twice since in Frankfort, on his return from Switzerland, in 1817, when many years had elapsed since our first meeting, and I had experienced several changes of fortune. I must not praise his conduct in the Westphalian affairs, which cannot, perhaps, be altogether defended from the charge of weakness; but he was personally a brave and well-meaning, and from his knowledge and talents, a most interesting man. At the time which I have mentioned, sickness had shattered his constitution,

and he was but a shadow of what he used to be. Accident brought us together about three weeks later. I was lodging at an hotel in Cologne, on my way to London, when a fire broke out in a neighbouring house, which, as the streets are very narrow there, was an extremely dangerous circumstance. I arose and went out; and in the street met poor Dohm with a packet under his arm. We had been living in the same hotel without knowing of our near neighbourhood. Soon after this he died. You ask me whether I am acquainted with the country about Prussian Minden, and the Porta Westphalia? No; I have travelled very hastily through the one, and never set foot in the other province. Their historical associations render them both very attractive; but it is very improbable that I shall ever become acquainted with them by personal observation, as I now travel with great difficulty, and confine my excursions to a particular circle. I gather from certain expressions which you use, that you wish to ask my advice respecting something. Ask without reserve; you know the pleasure with which I shall give you the best counsel in my power. You say, however, very truly, that I care very little either to ask or to give advice. People who ask advice have generally determined their course without its help. A man can well be guided by others in many things, as in matters of convenience or duty; but his resolutions must be his own. With all my heart I bid you farewell! Unchangeably yours,

H.

LETTER XXIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, September* 28, 1823.

I have received your letter of the 23rd, for which I give you many thanks. I have not time to send you an answer to-day, but write so immediately, simply for the purpose of giving my advice on the assistance in your affairs which you propose asking of the Duke of Brunswick. I know neither the duke, nor any one of the slightest influence in his dominions, and can, therefore, form no opinion of the effect which local and individual influences may have on your petition. I am on the whole inclined to think you right in proceeding thus openly and directly. I cannot see that it can be of any disadvantage to you, and need scarcely say that your letter contains nothing which is not perfectly right and becoming. It is possible that your prayer may be granted, and I advise you to write as soon as you learn that the duke is in Brunswick. Ask no more counsel of your friends, but attend to your own inclination and send the letter, not by means of any third person, but direct to the duke by the post. You possess the letters of the duke who fell at Waterloo, in which he expresses his sympathy for you, and holds out the hope of a pension at the conclusion of the campaign. Send the originals of these letters to the son, and found your claims on these expressions of his father. Represent that he granted you his sympathy, to a certain degree, in consideration of your position, but much rather on account of the sacrifices which you had made. Tell him, that if your circumstances are as worthy of commiseration as then, a small income would be a great comfort to you, and refer him, if he need a reference, to your female friend in Brunswick. Be careful to request him, whatever may be

his decision, to return the letters which you send him, since you regard them as very dear mementos. I cannot give you hope that you will gain anything by this step, the contrary will most probably be the case. But even then the only bad consequence of your proceeding will be the pain which you must feel at a refusal. On the other hand, I think that the sight of his father's handwriting may influence him much in your favour. I strongly advise you, I repeat, to write to him personally, and am firmly convinced that any other course would be attended with no good result. I do not know whether by the laws of Brunswick, its pensionaries must enjoy their pensions there; but I suppose that such is the case. However, when you obtain the pension, it will be time enough to ask a dispensation from this regulation. Yours, H.

LETTER XXIV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, October* 18, 1823.

I have lately answered the most important part of your last letter, and await with some anxiety for your next, to learn whether you have followed my advice. The issue of the step which you proposed to take must, of course, be very doubtful, but it could not do harm, and might do good. I have made it a rule through life never to neglect circumstances which might give a new direction to the course of my life, but rather to employ them, and to weave the thread of such events into the rest of my life, and this is the case with matters which have proceeded some way on their path, as this affair of yours has, by your acquaintance with the late Duke. His expressions were so kind that it would be a disgraceful thing, if you should

find them of no advantage. There is always also a mode of proving men's characters, and, together with that which we can effect by some degree of activity and management, the views, experiments, and combinations of our experience in life are frequently the most useful, and, at least, by far the most interesting of our acquisitions.

I am very much inclined, even more so than is right, to view life as a comedy, and in the most serious and engrossing occupations never lose the delight which I take in the observation of men and manners. By this means I have greatly added to the resources of my spirit, and received help and consolation in many labours and difficulties. This may be easily understood, and proceeds from a double reason,—the pleasure of tracing causes through all their successive developments, through all the labyrinths of circumstance, to effects, and the interest with which the mind watches the results as far as they concern its own position. Whilst this mode of thought does not weaken in the slightest degree a man's sympathy for his fellows, it renders him prudent, calm, and collected. This view, especially in important circumstances, affords the conviction that when such circumstances oppose our inclinations, they are still pursuing a course deeply fixed in the firmly established plans of fate. To foresee but the least of these plans is the greatest pleasure of which the human mind is susceptible. I never, however, apply this to the circumstances of my own life, but should consider it both vanity and selfishness if I were to look forward with great anxiety to my future prospects, to lay deep plans for my path through life. My personality interests me only as I bear adversity with fortitude, prosperity with modesty, and, for the rest, whether my sea be rough or calm, I care not, simply regarding myself as an atom of the mass. But yet I behold with great pleasure, from a point of view raised high above all self

interest, the characters of those who take part in the scenes of my life, on the nature of which so much depends. Those who would enter on such a study as this, must not do so out of mere curiosity, must not look upon this game of life as holiday folks look at a comedy, must not strive simply to understand the changes and chances of humanity in its worldly conditions, but with an intense interest must strive unweariedly to fathom its innermost nature, to comprehend the motions of those powers of fate which, crossing each other's orbits in a myriad of directions, intricate and unsearchable, roll on with a harmony incomprehensible. In this case, as in all others, humanity appears evil or good, according as the position of the spectator is evil or good. Send me, I pray you, the continuation of your biography as soon as you have brought it to a fitting close. Let me have it if possible before the 5th of November; and if you cannot, keep it back for some little time, for I purpose spending ten days in Thuringia, and, after that, a short time at Burgörner, but, in any case, I shall send you a few lines before my departure. With the greatest affection, I remain yours,

H.

That self-sufficiency of which I have spoken enables me to view good and bad fortune in a very different light from that in which they appear to other men. You speak in your letter, which I found on my arrival here, of "wishing," and ask me whether I have ever yielded to its attractions. I answer, certainly! and although I do not praise, but rather blame myself for the indulgence, I must say that it has proved to me a great comfort. I learned very young to be content with my own thoughts and feelings, independent of any exterior influences, and now this reserve and self-dependence being so suited to my advanced years, has become to me as a double nature, without, I hope, injuring the warmth of my

affection for others. For men are able to conceive it possible to desire without pain, and still to enjoy with thorough heartiness. I find it quite natural to my disposition. But you must not think that I blame the earnest longings and uneasy wishes of others. Every one must have his peculiar disposition, I have mine, and neither can nor wish to change it; but can assure you that your expression of the trusting affection which you bestow on me, fills me with much thankfulness. You proceed, I hope, with your biography. I go to Berlin in ten or twelve days, and hope to find letters from you there.

Yours, H.

LETTER XXV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, November* 3, 1823.

Many thanks for your letter of the 12th ultimo, which I have just received. I have not yet had time to read the portion of your history which you enclosed, I shall devote this paper therefore to your petition to the Duke and my journey.

I return you the draft of the letter which you propose to send to the Duke unaltered, it is a little too long perhaps, but I have thought it better to leave it as it is. When the writer wishes to make an impression, his composition must not be stamped with business, brevity, and exactness, but should rather be an unaffected expression of his feelings, and this appearance is always destroyed or weakened by the alterations of a third person. The attempted improvement is an injury. Besides which, I think, on consideration, that the length will be no disadvantage, as the interest with which the Duke must

see his father's handwriting would carry him to the end of your memorial with interest, even were it much longer. I leave this place in a few days, and wish you to write to me at Burgörner. Write on the cover—To be left till called for. Pardon the haste in which I write. Farewell!

Yours, H.

LETTER XXVI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Burgörner, November* 29, 1823.

I had but just read your letter of the 25th ult., when I received your letter of the 25th inst., and another part of your history, for both of which I give you my hearty thanks. If my departure had not been accidently delayed, I should not have received your first letter until my return, as I had left no orders that my letters should be forwarded, and must, therefore, consider the delay as very fortunate. My best wishes go with the memorial which you have at length sent to the Duke, which I begin to hope will have some good consequences, for I confide much in the effect of the late Duke's letters.

My health, I rejoice to say, is very good, and the weather is not merely fine for the season of the year, but is really very charming. The sun to-day has been particularly warm and cheering, lighting an almost unclouded sky. As I have many occupations, both public and private, I am particularly fond of living here, where I am so free from interruption, and where the solitude is so cheerful. The joy, moreover, of living with my family, is an indescribably pleasant addition to the happiness of my independently happy life. I have never been able to

understand how that deserved to be called happiness which simply supplied a need, which was near unhappiness; and it has always appeared to me that that only is true happiness which a man acquires, when, by satisfying himself with the most ordinary circumstances, he keeps his inclinations and his feelings in subjection to himself, and, by doing which, he so exalts his condition, though satisfactory in itself, that his original state, compared with what it now is, seems to have been essentially defective. I have ever been a stranger to violent desires and passionate expressions. But I will neither praise nor defend this disposition, which may proceed from a want of that natural fire and energy which is so necessary to a man for the successful prosecution of many most important and serious undertakings; and which, I may observe, was not always so peculiar to my character as it is now, when it is so proper for my years. Youth must lose in manhood the too passionate life of his feelings, and yet retain sufficient of their fire for the nourishment of firmness and energy.

I now return to the subject of your biography, for the last part of which I have already thanked you. I read it through last evening without pause, and was, as usual, extremely delighted. The interest is not at all injured, as you seem to fear, by the misplacing of some parts of the narrative. In such reminiscences as those which compose your narrative, it would be absurd to look for exact chronological arrangement, and so far from being vexed at the slight want of it which they display, I only read them with ever increasing wonder that you should remember so much of the days of your childhood. This portion of your history consists for the most part of conversations, and this gives it the advantage over all the former. Every thing contained in it is excellently conceived, and that, as you rightly observe, is the most indispensable requisite of good writing, and is united in your narrative with the other

excellence of exactness. I am very much interested in thus tracing the development of your mind, and quite concur with your observation that your intercourse with those who were so much older than yourself was a means of instruction the more lasting that it was so slight, and fell on a mind so earnestly desirous of a richer and more abundant instruction. And I have little doubt that this mode of education has been more valuable to you than any fine systematic course of instruction could have been. Such an education as the latter is not always the direct road to the formation of a good character, or the accumulation of knowledge. The confluence of the myriad circumstances about him, however slight in their nature, frequently has a greater part in the formation of a man's mind than any direct control; for the result of an education depends on the power with which a man seizes on opportunities, and takes advantage of their influence. I have observed with great pleasure that the disposition and understanding of your childhood exist in these later years of your life. For it has long been my favourite opinion that the real nature of a man's mind never changes. It may lay aside the errors of youth for the virtues of age, or exchange its early innocence for odious vices, but whether by activity or contemplation, violence or gentleness, whether energetically and boldly it seized on life, or was content to glide over its unfathomed waters, the sport of every treacherous gale, whatever were the distinguishing features of its youth, they will be, I maintain, the distinguishing features of its maturity. This is the chief substance of what I wish to say on the subject of the last portion of your biography. But I shall return to it at some other time. I should be very glad if you would weave into your narrative any letters or other documents which may be connected with it. I wish not merely to have a perfect knowledge of your character, but to see you as portrayed by

yourself. For the picture of your former self, drawn by yourself, and breathing your present self, united by your own hands to the picture of your present being, so strongly characteristic of your past, possesses for me an indescribable charm. As I very shortly leave this place, and yet shall not be in Berlin till Christmas, I pray you write to me, so that I may receive your letters just before New Year's-day. My wife, I rejoice to say, is very well; it is her custom to visit a watering-place once a year, sometimes with, and sometimes without me, and she is at present happily established at Marienbad. The report which you heard was malice or exaggeration. With hearty thanks for your sympathy and unchanging affection, believe me yours, H.

LETTER XXVII.

MY DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, Jan.* 12, 1824.

Many thanks for your letter of the 21st, and the affection which it breathes towards me. I return most heartily your wishes for a happy new year in my behalf, and as none can feel for you a more intense affection than I, so none can wish you more sincerely than I do—a happy and many happy new years. Take care of yourself, my dearest Charlotte, take care of your health, and take great care to be quiet, to be composed. For the light and shade, the happiness and unhappiness of a man's life, depend on the disposition with which he regards it. An unalloyed contentment of mind cannot be bought by man, it is the golden gift of Heaven. But it is within the reach of all to soften to himself the rough shocks of life in this busy world. We may receive them

courageously, sustain them patiently, and by his prudence alleviate or turn them aside; but even if his mind be unequal to these exertions, it need not, as is the case with too many, exert itself to annoy itself. These efforts ought not to be regarded as an impious attempt to shield ourselves from the might of Heaven; for it must surely be the will of God that we should use the strength and power, which he has given into our hands, against the violence of earthly foes, and the burdens of this our lower fate. I have made these observations, because, as I grieve to find, you give yourself up to sad forebodings and imaginary terrors. Your words, "Be not too severe on my weakness,—I do nothing but fear, an unhappy future haunts me like a spectre,—I am the slave of superstition, and superstition knows no peace," have made me sad indeed, and called forth my preceding observations. You have spoken so clearly and so well, reasoned so closely and correctly on superstition and melancholy in respect to your father, that you should be the last of all people to be moved by such trifles as those which now disturb and unsettle you. Do not think that I reproach you, be sure that I should never do that; my only desire is, that you should not vainly trouble yourself, by yielding to imaginary sorrows, which can but increase those which are real, injure your health, and hinder you from any real and healthful exertions. I write thus openly because I am convinced that the open expression of my sentiments must influence you more than any other, and have your repeated assurance that you find strength and consolation in my words.

I am established for the spring in Berlin, and wish you to direct your letters as usual. I should be very glad to receive a further portion of your autobiography. I perfectly agree with what you have said respecting it, and think that we shall also agree in the following observations. It is susceptible, I think, of the following three divisions: first, the continuation

of the history of your childhood until your marriage; secondly, of your married life; and thirdly, of your widowhood up to this time. I may judge from what you have already written, that you will find no difficulty in the first division,—the less, that it arouses no unpleasant reminiscences, and from its very nature must be suggestive of pleasant thoughts. I have often declared, and repeat, that it interests me exceedingly, and beseech you therefore to send me some further portion of it, how much I of course leave to you, and must be decided by your inclination and other avocations. Whether you will ever write or submit to my perusal the second division of your biography is another question. I need not say how much it would delight me; but I feel with you, that to write it would be to tear open many wounds, to prepare for yourself a long season of distress, and that the pleasure which I must feel in its perusal would be much embittered by this consideration; although I do not consider the retrospect of evil such an evil as you do, for it ever possesses for me a certain sweetness, and I love it moreover for the assistance which it gives me in gaining that independence of fortune which is so indispensable to a manly character. But I cannot give you my disposition, nor am I quite sure that I should have maintained it under such misfortunes as yours. It is for you to decide, my dear Charlotte, whether you will break off in your narrative at the close of the first, or carry it on to the second period of your life. I am convinced, and the conviction fills me with great pleasure, that you would make a great sacrifice for my sake, but I could take no pleasure in a gratification purchased at the expense of much pain to you. The third period is not open to such great objections as the second, but in your narrative of the former you must too often refer to the latter; your present sentiments are too closely interwoven, too greatly dependent on those of the second period of your life, to be considered and delineated without much

pain. But however this may be, let me have, at least, that which I have desired so long,—a vivid and perfect description of another's youth and childhood. And now farewell! Be comforted, confide in the future, and ever be careful not to add imaginary to real cares. With unchangeable affection I remain

Yours, H.

LETTER XXVIII.

THERE are several defences against the strokes of fate; they are,—patience, and submission to its ordinances, and a firm hope and confidence that they will work together for good.

You ask me whether I have ever read the Bible. Yes. I have read it through many times; the last of which was during my stay in London, and I am very well acquainted with the chapter in the Corinthians, to which you allude. It is one of the finest in the New Testament, if rightly understood; but it is also one of those which may be too easily interpreted according to our own feelings and peculiar ideas, and still, though these may be very pious, wrongly interpreted. In the Greek text, however, this is less possible. Our German language has the word love (liebe), which, indeed, is a very noble and beautiful word, but has many different significations. Now in Greek there is one particular word for that gentle long-suffering, heaven-aspiring love, which is meant by our word "love" in this chapter, a word which is never used for the love of the two sexes. I am far, nevertheless, from blaming our Lutheran translation on this account, for I admire this word "love" with its many significations, touching, as it does, the very root of all

our sensibilities. Two things, it appears to me, render this chapter pre-eminently great and valuable, and show the sense in which the Apostle used the word "love": first, the meaning of the passage points, not merely to eternity, but to love itself, as something eternal, and opposed to many other things, themselves great and valuable, but yet of only temporary duration; and next, love is described, not as a separate feeling, but visibly as a whole condition of the soul diffusing itself over the entire man. Love, that is, never fails. This sufficiently proves that it must be directed to objects which are themselves eternal and imperishable; and that it must become proper to the heart in such a manner, that in no condition of being it can be deprived of its presence. It is not, indeed, of a particular, defined love, of which the Apostle speaks—not even of that of the Supreme Being—but of an inward sentiment, or disposition of the soul, which pours forth itself upon all things worthy of love, or to which love can be applied. At the first view of the subject it is not easy to understand, why, since everything here below is described as vain and partial, love alone should be considered as belonging to that which is entire and perfect. Whatever else the Apostle names is plainly spoken of as imperfect, because it cannot be otherwise in finite beings; and love itself, however pure and exalted it may be, still only exists in finite creatures, as described in this portion of Scripture. The distinction which is made may probably be thus explained:—The other things of which the Apostle speaks as imperfect, presuppose a degree of knowledge and power to render them otherwise, which cannot be found in human and finite beings; but love, on the contrary, has its birth in a condition confessedly necessitous: it pertains purely to sentiment and feeling, and is altogether self-sacrificing, obedient, and resigned. Hence it is not so confined or contracted by the bonds of a finite nature. But it could not indeed abide in

man at all, if there were not in his innermost being a principle which connects him with the infinite; and when the breath of love once inspires him, he feels more than ever his relationship with Heaven. But, as I said at the beginning, most persons will interpret this passage of the Bible, and without necessarily misunderstanding it, according to their own individual feeling. I, on the contrary, believe, that the term "love," as here used, ought to be understood as distinct from all particular, individual sentiments: that it should be taken only as the representation of a loftier state of the soul, which, free from all selfishness, far removed from the influence of every passion, complacently resigns itself alike to prosperity and adversity, and from this its own state of rest diffuses a genial warmth upon all by which it is surrounded. And hence it is said, that love envieth not; behaveth not itself unseemly, &c.: hence it is that it is raised above faith and hope, and especially above works, which can only appear for the moment. And this is properly the case, since, if love be as here described, works must spring from its own influence. To this state of the soul, anxiety, restlessness, care, covetousness, thoughts of right, rather than of duty, arising from vanity and self-conceit, are altogether foreign. It is thus that I interpret this portion of Scripture; but I am far from asserting that no other view might be taken of its meaning.

LETTER XXIX.

You ask me what is the meaning of that distinction between those who prophesy, and those who speak with tongues, which St. Paul makes in the 14th chapter of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians. It is, indeed, a difficult passage, and one

which we may consider a long while without finding out the right meaning. The distribution of light and shade in the New Testament, is one of its chief beauties. All that which concerns the improvement, the comfort, the edification of man, is perfectly clear, and the clear-obscure of the less apparent passages is by no means an injury to it. A man whilst he fulfils his duties, which is the only thing absolutely necessary, must have some guide and assistance in his passage over the deep waters of life, and in fathoming their depths; and this guide and assistance he finds in these passages of a book which is given him to be ever in his hands; mysteries are placed before him that by earnest contemplation he may fathom them. I understand the passage respecting the speaking with tongues thus:—The Apostle has placed the two things in opposition. Speaking is with the tongue or with tongues, and prophesying with the spirit and the understanding. Luther has, I believe, so translated the Greek word; but I have no German Bible at hand. By the speaking with tongues, he understands, as I think, that inspired discourse which, obeying some superior impulse, springs forth from the heart of a man, without care whether it be heard or understood. Of this kind is a man's discourse with God and himself. He does not understand the word "prophecy" as a prediction of the future, but an open declaration of great and important truths: whoever did this in the east was called a prophet, such a declaration having plainly for its purpose instruction and edification; and that it might be suited to the capacities of the hearers, it was necessarily conveyed in words prepared by the understanding of some, for the understanding of others. The Apostle, therefore, very properly defines the relation which these two voices of the soul bear to each other. The speech of inspiration is the most glorious of the voices of humanity; on the nature of a man's conversation with God, depends his capability of being useful to his fellow-men. By

that means he edifies himself, and, as the Apostle rightly observes, none can edify others who is not edified. But this inner inspiration of a man's soul is not directly useful to others, and therefore not so fitted for instruction as prophesying, which is the means of giving inspiration to others. But the highest privilege is to possess both these gifts, to be inspired in ourselves, and to have power to instruct others by prophecy. This is very clearly expressed in the fifth verse, where the Apostle wishes that all might have the gift of tongues, but much rather that all should teach, because this is so much the more useful. This wish of the Apostle countenanced the practice of the early church, by which every member of the congregation had a right to speak. The expression "with tongues or with the tongue," is curious, but perfectly right. In Greek, the word which is translated into our word tongues signifies foreign, unknown, or unusual words. This may also be taken into consideration, that when the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit they spoke in unknown tongues. Both agree with the inspired language which one uses when meditating enraptured over his own thoughts, little caring or questioning whether another understands them or not. But I do not think both expressions equally applicable, especially on this account: the expression is "to speak with the tongue," and not merely with "tongues." The explanation of the expression may be made simpler. When a man speaks of his own experience, of that which is very manifest to his own thoughts, his tongue is but the senseless tool of his understanding. But when a man suddenly expresses the exalted but ill-defined ideas which occur to him, the gift of a superior spirit, before that he has tracked their glimmering lights to the full glare of apparent truth, it is not the understanding which speaks but the tongue, in obedience to the mandate of some foreign power. This may be called with particular correctness the voice of the

Spirit. The word "tongue" is used only in a figurative sense; and as the Apostle holds that that which the tongue declares, in the manner which I have mentioned above, is the voice of an exalted spirit, even the Holy Ghost; he may very properly attribute such sayings of men to the "tongue." The Holy Spirit lays the truth on men's tongues, which they could never find or comprehend of their own power. It is well said of a man who expresses what he does not think, that he speaks with the tongue and not with the heart.

The tongue speaks in this case (from an inner inspiration or divine impulse) without consulting the humanly reasoning and judging mind. In this consists the beauty of the Apostle's observation. We should ever seek for inspiration, for conversation with God, but ought to strive much more earnestly for an understanding fitted to instruct.

Yours, H.

LETTER XXX.

Berlin, March 12, 1824.

I RETURN you my hearty thanks for your letter of the 21st. I am very grieved to find that you are still a prey to imaginary anxieties and sad forebodings. Do, I beseech you, dear Charlotte, make every effort to gain greater command over your own mind, for the sake of its inner health and improvement. Whether I write early or late, fully or briefly, depends on so many adventitious circumstances that you must never suffer anything of that sort to give you a moment's uneasiness. It is pleasant to find, in your anxiety after the state of my health, another proof of your friendship, but I assure you that I am perfectly well. My whole time is occupied with

important matters. I scarcely leave my library till late in the evening. I am busy and active. Surely no one could fear ill health who passed a life like this! I know that any day or hour may bring with it ill health, but when it comes it will find me prepared. Sickness has but little effect on my mind, for I have disciplined myself, from very early youth, and you must not think me very unfortunate should I for once be really ill, for I have been able to give such a direction to my occupations that they would suffer but little injury from any present delay. I am glad to find, from your letter, that you are in good health, and have passed through this very severe winter much more happily than I had expected. In the absence of lasting and violent cold, I care but little for the petty annoyances which are necessarily attendant on changeable winter weather. Genuine actual cold has somewhat more in it than simply physical benumbing effect; it occurs regularly that men should never be altogether free from its visitation; it gives Nature herself so uniform a look, and is truly unmerciful to the poor, unless they are so happy as to live in southern lands, where they are at least free from this plague. It is long, my dear Charlotte, since you sent me any portion of your biography. The winter, I suppose, with its multitudinous occupations and short days, is guilty of this neglect. I earnestly request you, if you have time and inclination, to continue your narrative to the time of your marriage. I will not ask you for more than this. But up to this point your autobiography must be, I think, an amusing and comforting occupation. If you have sufficient to form a tolerably large packet, pray send it to me directly, in the usual way. Remember that the condition of my being pleased by your exertions is that they are pleasing to you also. That which you have already sent me forms a cheerful, attractive, and vivid picture, which it would be a pity not to finish, as it now needs but so few touches.

I spent some hours to-day in Tegel, and, unfavourable as was the weather, enjoyed them very much. The spring approaches rapidly, and fills us with the sense of a new youth. Our spirits become joyous, and we imagine that a new period of existence is dawning upon us, without thinking how few, how very few months must elapse before the return of winter. But this self-deception is delightful and healthful, an ever-recurring pleasurable circumstance of life. I may say, at least, for my own part, that I have experienced similar sensations from my earliest childhood; and I cannot imagine you, so interested and active as you are, in your garden, without them. With the most unchanging affection, I remain,

Yours, H.

LETTER XXXI.

April, 1824.

THE successful issue of our undertakings is the result of an indescribable energy which is not the part of a man's own nature; a blessing which, as you rightly observe, proceeding from a higher intelligence, rests on each man with a fulness proportioned to the purity of his soul. A blessing which once gained cannot be lost, but is ever working in a man's inner being, invisibly and mysteriously. The ideas of men, who are the most anxious that their ideas should be correct, respecting happiness and unhappiness, are so various and undecided, that it has ever been a great object with me to render myself independent of either; and from the success which, to a certain degree, has attended my efforts, I am convinced that a large amount of happiness may be the portion of every man, who is ready to draw the good and the sweet from all the circumstances of life, without identifying himself with any.

Although, dear Charlotte, you did not perfectly understand my last letter, you at least learned from it the continuance of my most hearty interest in everything which concerns you, my tenderest sympathy. I wish nothing more sincerely than that, free from all your vexations, you may lead a quiet happy life, in the full possession of your health, and of those simple pleasures which you hold so dear. I rejoice that I have a prominent place in your thoughts, and repeat my earnest prayer that you will never hesitate to express any wish that you may have beyond your means, which, if it be within mine, shall be instantly gratified. Lay aside all false delicacy. Remember our agreement of mutual confidence. I am very grieved to find that you still make such exertions whilst yet suffering distress both of body and mind. Although I honour you for it, I cannot but wish to see you in a position more accordant with your original station, possessing that leisure which you could employ so well. Permit me to advise you to indulge yourself with some recreation or luxury in this beautiful spring-tide. Would not a course of baths do you good? Answer me, dear Charlotte, in full confidence.

Yours, H.

LETTER XXXII.

May.

You cannot imagine the pleasure which the last portion of your biography has given me. I have read it through with the greatest sympathy. It is a most happy and interesting picture of the life which you led in the midst of happy circumstances and interesting people. It makes the past visible as the present. You have delineated most accurately the

various manners and characteristics of the German provinces; and in these, as well as in many other portions of your narrative, not directly connected with yourself, I have been exceedingly interested: among other things, with your account of Baum, which formed the summer residence of the remarkable and famous Earl of Lippe-Bückeburg. The dwellings of distinguished men always have a peculiarly moving and exalting charm for me; a charm which I feel to its fullest extent in approaching places connected with such associations as Potsdam. Kings always transform the neighbourhood of their habitations, and stamp it with the impress of their glory, giving to contemplative minds many a trace of their characters. The mere thought even that we walk on spots, and in the midst of scenes, where they have once walked, which they have once beheld, helps the mind to realise the idea which it has formed of them, and excites feelings in my heart which to those of a cold and practical disposition may appear ridiculous.

Baum must have been made by its possessor, if I may credit your beautiful and brilliant description, a remarkable and attractive place. The union of the princely resources of art and unwearied boldness of fancy, with the glorious charms of nature, is peculiarly delightful; and, judging from the few parts of Westphalia, which I have seen, the breadth, depth, and freshness of the scenes which you describe, must give them a nobleness indescribable. But far more interesting to me than any physical beauties are the sketches which you give of the Earl's life. The tenderness of his feelings for a sick wife, the philosophy and love for religion of a man who was distinguished for his courage, high spirit, and so many extraordinary qualities, as appears from the anecdotes which you relate respecting him, the domestic virtues, I say, of such a man have a double beauty. Especially affecting is the care with which he ever tended his sick wife himself, refusing to

entrust her to the love of any but himself. In that strict solitude in which he lived with the object of all his affections, and which he made yet stricter after her death, appears the might of his soul, which was sufficient of itself for itself, and found in itself that contentment which so many seek in vain. That the unfortunate man died of poison, I consider one of those tales which were formerly current in Protestant countries, respecting those who had been in Southern lands and were engaged in hostilities with the priesthood. No poison is known of so slow an action as his is said to have been; as for Aqua Toffana, it is a perfectly meaningless name, or, at least, it is quite certain that there is no known poison of that name. In the hall of an old house near here, there used to hang many pictures of princes and other remarkable persons, with all of whom my father was well acquainted, and among them a portrait of William Earl of Lippe-Bückeburg, which I remember very well. But when the French were in this part of the country, and many of them quartered in this mansion, most of the paintings were injured or lost, the Earl's portrait being among the latter, for which I doubly grieve after reading your account.

The power which you possessed as a child, of creating phantasies of objects, whose existence you wished or expected, belonged to me also from my earliest infancy, from my sixth year I think. The habit seems to have been first aroused in you by the longing for a friend, and the perusal of Clarissa; but was caused in me by no outward circumstances that I remember. The objects which passed through my mind in this manner were very numerous and various; but one has remained with me from the time of my childhood until now, and will probably so remain until my death. If I lie awake at night, ride or walk alone, or at any time am unoccupied in my thoughts, this phantom of my childhood stalks before me, ever

changing its form, but still ever the same. As this is an object unlike any of the figures which I meet in life, it disappears before the reality of life; but whether it approach or leave me, I am ever heartily thankful for this power of peopling my thoughts. It is especially the natural consequence of all activity of mind and liveliness of imagination, that the realities of life fall into the shade, and the diminution of the too great importance which we attach to them is ever healthful, for then misfortune has less power to harm us, happiness ceases to depend on their enjoyment, and makes the thought bearable that good fortune is transitory. You will please me very much by continuing diligently your autobiography.

Yours, most affectionately, H.

LETTER XXXIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, June* 15, 1824.

I return you many thanks for your last letter, and that dated the 22nd May, both of which I received just before Whitsuntide. I write to you some days later than I should otherwise have done, because, as in the first of these letters, you promised another very speedily, I thought it better to wait until I could answer both at the same time. This is my apology for the neglect of which I have, apparently, been guilty. My joy that your health is generally very good has been much damped by the account which you give of the pains in your hands, which have plainly declared themselves rheumatic, by their continuance through this fine warm weather; and may, if not met in time with the proper remedies, which I entreat you to use immediately, be the forerunner of a severe attack of

gout. Does this pain in your hands simply disturb, or seriously trouble you in your occupations? Pray remember that the pleasure, the very great pleasure which I take in your letters, would be purchased too dearly, if at the expense of feeling that its gratification caused you annoyance and distress. I am inclined to think, however, that your ordinary occupations now cause you less pain, partly because, as you once said, the portion of the work which requires most effort you can accomplish by the aid of others, and partly because while writing requires but little strength, the holding of the pen is itself painful. I have ever disliked writing, and even now write unwillingly; this may sound strange from one who has written so much as I, but, nevertheless, it is true. Still I have not written so much as the world might suppose. From my childhood I have loved to live in my own soul rather than in the world amidst my fellow creatures, and have seldom taken pleasure in communicating with others. I have never taken any pleasure either in narrating or describing, and when it has been necessary that I should do either, my narrations and descriptions have been as short as possible; while, on the other hand, I have taken especial delight in the narrations and descriptions of others. You may, perhaps, trace some selfishness in this love of receiving and dislike to giving,—be it so, I must plead guilty. It has ever been my nature to write little and speak little; when I make an exception to these habits, it is to please some one who may value my writings and my words.

You seem, dear Charlotte, to be once more busily engaged with your occupations, at which, if it does not weary you too much, I am greatly rejoiced. I have ever honoured the peculiar strength of your character which has enabled you to maintain your independence after your great losses; and in the prosecution of this object to soften, if not forget, many of your sorrows, and to gratify your chief inclination, the contemplation

of nature. And it has therefore ever been my wish that you should give such a direction to this pursuit as to render its continuance possible and advantageous to you in later years, and at less expense of labour.

I share to its full extent your feeling that visits are more disturbing during a short period of relaxation from our ordinary occupations than at any other time, and am with you very much opposed to the practice which most people follow of overwhelming one at such times with their unwelcome attentions. I shall commence my journey within a few days, and as I cannot be certain of the place of my residence until the end of July, must request you, although it will be a great sorrow to me to have no letters from you for so long a time, not to write till after then, and then to direct to Ottmachau, near Neisse, in Silesia. Farewell! I remain, with unchangeable affection,

Yours, H.

LETTER XXXIV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Herrnstadt, June* 9, 1824.

I write to you in the Roman characters, because my eye-sight has been for some time very bad, and I discover that the large clear Roman letters try them less than the little German figures. The change will render also the perusal of my writing less difficult to you. There are some persons, I know, who dislike the Roman text, and will not use it in corresponding with persons whom they esteem. You are, I well know, free from such narrow prejudices, but if you dislike in any way this mode of writing, I will instantly desist from the innovation. If I have never informed you of the circumstance of my second daughter's marriage, it is scarcely

probable that you will know anything of the place from which I date my letter; but you must not be surprised at this, for, as I wrote to you from Berlin, it is a very unusual thing with me to make any mention in my letters of family affairs. I have been but a very few days at this place, an unimportant little town, distant about a day's journey from Breslau, and after a few more I propose going to my estate at Ottmachau, to which place I wish you to direct your next letter. I have always taken a peculiar pleasure in thinking that for our sakes a friend regards a place, whose name he has scarcely ever heard, with friendly sympathy as our abode. Such feelings will be excited in your heart by the superscription of my letter. The weather here is warm and moist; and, although rather relaxing to the spirits, has for me a very pleasing melancholy. The silence of nature is more sweetly still, and a veil of haze darkling over all the landscape softens, without obscuring, forms and colours. I am doubly attentive during a journey to the various modifications of the scenery which are produced by the changes of the atmosphere, finding in these modifications of physical scenery, semblances of the various shades of character among men; calm and boisterous, gentle and harsh, cheerful and mournful, humorous and morose, they are all there. In this manner they appear to him who knows how to view them aright. I may safely affirm that I only experience this feeling so far as it is agreeable and cheering. The weather never has any unpleasant influence upon me; but be it foul or fair, I receive it with as much indifference as smiling or terrible scenes in a theatre. I suppose, by-the-by, that you never, or at most but very seldom, visit the theatre. It has closed doors for me, for my eyes are too weak to bear the glare of the lamps, and my hearing too weak to distinguish the words of the best speaker. The genius even of a company of actors, who are now performing here, and

in whose theatre one need not fear being blinded by excess of light, and where the complaint is not that of not hearing, but of being stunned by hearing too much, has not prevailed upon me to break through my usual habit. A person debars himself of much who neglects, when not compelled to do so by circumstances, to see a good play in the hands of good actors. Even where the actors are but indifferent, if the piece be but a good one, there is something which interests and exalts most people to a far higher degree than could have been effected by the solitary perusal of any book; but, on the other hand, how much sweeter, how charming a thing it is, apart from all other friends, to find a friend in a book! When I was young, and even when I had reached man's estate, I took a lively pleasure in justifying my aversion to society, and my old inclinations are now, when they are so suitable to my age, firmer than ever. I always looked forward to old age with peculiar delight, and now that I am approaching it, I find my expectations surpassed. I am fifty-seven years old, and having been subject to but very few bodily afflictions—having led a very regular life, and indulged in no excitements which injure health—I have not many infirmities. But it is difficult to obtain, in early youth, a perfect serenity of soul, and independence of all outward things, and when obtained, it, unfortunately, too frequently becomes coldness and insensibility, which are worse than the greatest susceptibility. It is by no means just to say that old age is entirely dependent on circumstances and chance, for though this may be the case to a certain extent in outward material things, it is very much less even in these than is commonly supposed; the desires, at least, of an old man who has well ordered his life, seldom exceed the powers which age has left him for their gratification. On the other side, real independence, and an independence productive of still greater happiness, gains vastly by this means.

Want of patience and resignation are the things which make us doubly sensible of our sorrows, and increase the burden of our griefs. Old age affords an especial cure for both these evils, supposing, that is, it has no deeply-rooted perverse dispositions, which would poison any period of life. But the greatest gain which springs from this spiritual freedom, from this freedom from passion, this long-suffering, serene, and time-softened disposition, is, that reflection is thereby purer, stronger, better sustained; that the intellectual horizon becomes clearer; and that the soul, occupying itself with every kind of knowledge, and every kind of truth, has no other desire. A contemplative inquiring life is the highest state of existence in this world, and can only be enjoyed perfectly in age. In early life the clamour of the world and even our duties distract our thoughts. But it would be an error to suppose that this pleasure could be enjoyed without a deep and extensive knowledge of human life. For these supply reflection with its food, with a wide and manifold series of images. Nevertheless the most needful, holy, and cheering truths are frequently better understood, more deeply fathomed, by plain simple minds, than by those which have traversed wide fields of knowledge. These truths have, moreover, the peculiarity that, although they give no trouble in their discovery, arising, as it were, spontaneously in the mind, they ever offer something new, because they are actually endless and inexhaustible. These truths connect themselves with every age, but most naturally with that which stands nearest to the final solution of all those infinite riddles which involve these truths. A certain kind of vitality is diminished in our later years, but it is only an outward, falsely prized life. The much more beneficial, more beautiful, and nobler kind, that which unfolds itself in fruitful purity, is peculiar to old age. I know, dear Charlotte, that your sentiments are the same as mine in these matters, and that my observations respecting

them will not be altogether unpleasant. Such matters, indeed, are well fitted for such a correspondence, which, forgetful of the narrow limits of worldly matters, ever seeks to be the unreserved communication of two mutually sympathising minds. Please to direct to Ottmachau, according to the new direction which I have given you. With the most unfeigned affection, I remain yours, H.

LETTER XXXV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, September* 12, 1824.

I returned to this place some few days since, and have made it one of my first cares to write to you. You will already, I suppose, have received my last letter from Ottmachau. The autumn promises to be very fine, and I am doubly pleased at being here, as I can here enjoy so well the last pleasant months of the year, the phenomena which attend its departure, always more gratifying to me than those which beautify its entrance. When we look back on the many things which we have done, the time which we have spent, we can look forward with more security, because we feel that there is now less room for error and misfortune. A moment may bring misfortune and disappointment to the greatest, and so much in life, in its good as well as in its ill, is nothing but disappointment, that we may well be glad to reach its calmer moments. I am especially free from care for myself, not because I think myself less exposed to misfortune than other men, or fear none of the chances of the world, but because from early youth I have diligently taught myself to be prepared for every change of fortune. It is impossible to resist the idea that life is a vast immense

of waters, through whose contending currents we must guide our trembling bark, and it is most natural that we should rejoice when a large portion of the journey has been accomplished. This view of life as a whole, presenting a great work to be accomplished, has ever appeared to me a mighty aid towards meeting death with serenity.

But if a man looks only at the separate passages of life, uniting all the good together, how sad must be the rest of the prospect, how truly calamitous must every misfortune appear!

Autumn already has begun to compensate Nature for the loss of the fresh green of her foliage, with her thousand varied hues; and for the observation of this, as well as of all the other changes of wooded landscape, the situation of my house in the midst of innumerable noble trees is well fitted. Right before my threshold scions of the forest wave their green fan-like boughs; they form long avenues across the fields, and in solitary beauty people the gardens and vineyards; in the parks they stand together in many a dark and solemn grove; they are a girdle about the lake, and a crown to its hundred islands. Great is my love for trees, and never, could I have my wish, should one be destroyed or transplanted. It is a sad thing to tear a poor tree from its fellows with whom it has passed so many years, to tear it away to perish, or, at least, to pine amongst strange scenes. The affectionate nature of trees is manifest: how firmly they hold to their native soil! I know nothing in nature more symbolical of the love of home, of the deeply-rooted longings of a human being's heart. However wide may be his wanderings, his heart is bound to one little spot, where sometimes, and this is frequently the case with women, he finds both his cradle and his grave; to that little spot, his first home, to which, if his duties draw him away, he frequently returns, he ever gives, should this be impossible, his best thoughts and wishes.

I am very glad to find that your garden, if nothing else, makes you enjoy a country residence, and fully sympathise in the pleasure which you take in your flowers. The approach of winter and autumn is far from pleasant to me, and disturbs many of my occupations; but to compensate this annoyance, my eyes have become much stronger by the use of the medicines which have been recommended me, although they still require much care, and I dare not expose them to the light. At the same time the days are becoming shorter, and when we reckon how much time is occupied with the common circumstances of domestic life, by visits and interruptions of various kinds, not to mention actual business, little will be found to remain. The longer I devote myself to study and contemplation, the greater inclination and love I have for such occupations of my time. The things of the world have no longer any interest for me, but pass by me as momentary visions, with which neither my mind nor spirit has any connection. The circle of my acquaintance becomes narrower every day; my dearest friends are dead, and I have now lost such society as I think a man may ever turn to good account as one of the best gifts of fortune, but should never seek as a necessary. But contemplation is an immeasurable field of knowledge and discovery, which ever offers new charms, an amusement and occupation for every hour, and which makes us wish them magnified a thousand fold. I have often passed whole days entirely occupied with my own thoughts. Natural science has never attracted me. I am wanting in the faculty for observing outward objects. My mind busies itself but little with the outward world of the present, and from its infancy has devoted the largest portion of its attention to the study of antiquity. The nearer humanity is to its origin, the more noble are its simple manliness, the deeper and worthier its sentiments and ideas, and the language of their expression. To arrive, indeed, at a full and perfect view

of a science such as this, we must undertake long, laborious, and, frequently, mechanical studies; but even these have their own peculiar charm, and are easily vanquished by habits of patient industry. Amongst the most glorious, the purest, and most beautiful of the voices of hoar antiquity, are the books of the Old Testament, and we can never be sufficiently thankful to our mother-tongue that it interprets them to our ears with so little loss of their original grandeur. I have often taken pleasure in considering whether it would be possible to compose any other book so sublime, so various, so treasure-full, as the Old and New Testaments. If these were the only books in the possession of humanity, it would find in them a complete course of religion, history, poetry, and philosophy, an accord to every feeling of its soul. Unfortunately, they are so little understood, as to be inaccessible to ordinary minds; and, although they send none away unsatisfied, they open the vastness of their treasures to those only who come with spirits well prepared.

During the remainder of this and the greater part of next month I shall remain here, and then propose spending a few weeks at Berlin; to which place you may securely direct your letters. In November and December I shall probably make a tour, as I did last autumn, and conclude it with a residence of six or seven days at Burgörner; but I have not quite decided respecting this, and shall certainly write to you again before I set out on my journey. It is always most agreeable to me to remain in the same place, and seeking another is in me as putting weights in an opposite scale. Consequently, travelling and change of residence on my part is generally a matter of necessity, rarely of pleasure. Farewell, dear Charlotte! With the utmost affection I remain yours, H.

LETTER XXXVI.

Burgörner, November 13, 1824.

YOUR letter of the 26th ultimo, pleased me as all your other letters. It is very kind of you to esteem so highly the delight which I ever have, and ever shall take, in your biography, and which you rightly attribute to the pleasure which I receive not so much from the descriptions which you give of outward circumstances and events, as from your finely drawn delineations of your own soul. I am charmed with both. Although that which occurred in the long past no longer influences the objects of our present interest, yet we read every thing connected with this time with a true feeling of its presence. It is as though the particular feelings of joy and sorrow which once were active, were active still, and to a certain extent it is so. However great the power of time is, there are certain sentiments which, though no longer immediately in harmony with the feelings, never entirely vanish from the mind. In this respect there is somewhat in our actual being which may rightly be regarded eternal. I do not mean merely the fixedness of feelings which remain unaltered.

In these there is always a distinction between the past and the present in the manner in which they remain unaltered. But the whole of the feelings which have ever affected the soul form a so closely interwoven web, that the joy and pain of days which have long since gone by, still send a tremor through the souls which they have ceased directly to influence. As it is with my own feelings it is with my sympathies for others. In the development of your former ideas, of the sentiments of your youth and childhood, times now so far away, you have succeeded uncommonly well, and your narrations bring the

objects of which they speak not merely before my mental vision in their outward forms, but breathing and glowing as though they really lived. Nothing is defective, everything is true to nature; which proves that you possess, to an unusual degree, that inner life, in which, indeed, women are generally superior to men, as well from their nature as from the difference of their occupations, which are by far the more suitable for reverie and contemplation; but which are united in very few with such clearness of thought and magnificent self-consciousness as they are in you. Hence their intellect in its activity is often dark and confused, since contemplation in the first instance is a property of the outward senses. Your mind, however, as all your descriptions, so defined and pointed, prove, can take up its position in every period of time to which your memory is sufficiently awake to lead it. Hence you need but to write the suggestions of your own soul, and have no occasion to fill up your sketches from your imagination, or to leave them unfinished: they are already perfect. The great practice which, beyond most women, you have had in writing, has aided you in this; and all your writings are vivid pictures of the world of your soul and your life in the world, the latter, however, only so far as it illustrates and explains the former.

You speak as though you feared blame for this portion of your biography: for what reason I cannot understand. Assure yourself that it contains nothing which could possibly excite my displeasure. The descriptions which you give of your now so long-deceased parents, and your opinions on their characters, part of which you have already written, could not be interpreted unfavourably. When we undertake to describe a character, let us perform our part with perfect sincerity; by softening down every shade we may make the light of the picture the greater, but shall do so at the expense as well of expressiveness as of truth. To delineate with an impartial hand those to

whom we owe love, reverence, and gratitude, throws no slur upon the life of those feelings in our breasts. They spring from the original bond between parents and children, or those whom a similarity of souls has united together, from that union which ever remains as sincere, which is ever as highly prized and loved, however slight or extensive may be the knowledge which each has of the others' faults. The love which the child owes to the parent, the payment of which is so delightful to an amiable and gentle disposition, exists more frequently in the inner than the outward being, and without, perhaps, having been once positively expressed, gleams from his looks, his habits, and his whole character. It is one of the most beautiful laws of humanity, which so easily errs, which preserves its purity through life with so much difficulty, that we may love and ever reverence those whose weakness we know, or whom, at least, we know to be subject to error. If a man be conscious that he is free from that cold cavilling disposition which, before it will either love or reverence, must weigh, or measure with scrupulous eye, every little fault,—if a man be sure that his friendship is warm and sincere, he need never hesitate to consider and to analyse the character of his friends. For my own part, I have very little inclination either to blame or praise the actions of others. I consider things historically, as they form themselves inwardly and outwardly; but in which case one can seldom rightly determine whence they arose, and it is as difficult to praise or blame them with justice. Thus it is, and thus it has been. Moral worth is exclusively connected with the sentiment which accompanies the conduct, and of this conscience is the sole judge.

Every man is his own judge, and when anything in this conduct deserves blame, his own reproofs are bitterer than those of any other could be. In like manner also is it with praise, which should always rather be received as a free-will

offering than as a deserved reward. Of course we can never praise ourselves as others praise us, but that is because it is pleasanter to give as well as to receive praise than blame, and consequently more easy of expression, for blame is taciturn in its excessive bitterness. Praise is not worth much, and I always take care when I am its object to receive it as a pleasant sensation, as metal which has not been assayed, and, if I do not use caution, as very probably a source of injury.

Farewell. With unchanging affection, I remain yours,

H.

In the past are large materials for joy and sorrow, contentment and repentance, according as a man in his struggles with fate has resisted manfully, or submitted with cowardice. What has there been found of pain is ineffaceable as a scar; and what of joy, as immoveable as a soul-rooted thought; and, besides, it is perfectly free from any anxiety for the future.

Submission and contentment are the best bucklers against the sorrows of life. He who cannot bear with firmness want and suffering, can never be free from want and suffering, or, at least, is a continual victim to unpleasant thoughts and feelings.

A man has perfect power over himself with respect to his moral being, and he should not be too anxious to possess it over others.

It is the noblest disposition, and that which produces most serenity and repose to the soul, to avoid rather than to strive against men and fate, to receive thankfully that which they give, but never to desire; or at least never to be disheartened at the loss of that which they deny.

The subject of inspiration and presentiment is very curious. Sometimes they prove right, and sometimes wrong; but it is no reason why we should regard it as a matter of mere chance,

when they prove to have been true prophets of the future. It is with these as with everything which affects our inward consciousness. This consciousness may deceive a man; he may regard that as an omen which is none; and, on the other hand, he may mistake the meaning of those which are. Objective security is not possible in this case. Their true recognition bears with it no outward signs. There are constantly, though often but weak, indications of such things; they may be seated in the soul itself, or may be created through the disturbing influence of hope or fear. In the former case they may be trusted, in the latter not. The wisest course is by no means to invite them; to think when they appear of the possibility of their falsehood; and when they are unfavourable to be convinced of their truth. Yours, H.

LETTER XXXVII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, December*, 1824.

I returned to this place a few days since, and make it one of my first occupations to renew the old, sweet custom of our correspondence, which I know is as pleasing to you as to myself. The end of the year draws nigh, and this season always appears to me a fitting time for the closer connecting and renewal of the bonds of friendly union. When I look back upon the past year I am filled with a lively and sincere thankfulness for the kind sympathy which you have bestowed upon me, which, as I need scarcely say, together with your confidence and affection, I treasure up in the inmost recesses of my soul. I return it most heartily, offering, as I have so frequently offered, my most ready sympathy and assistance in the further-

ance of all things connected with your welfare. Pardon these strong expressions, which, I must own, are unnecessary, and have never been called forth by the expression of any doubt on your part; but I always wish to speak as I feel, as I should otherwise, I well know, be frequently misunderstood. I am well aware that my mode of declaring my good wishes is unusual, but as I am I must be; and, as far as this matter is concerned, know not how to change my character even if I would. I make these observations, because I feel that I might easily be misunderstood, and because, moreover, I was very anxious to declare to you at this season, that you shall never have just reason to doubt the sincerity of my affection; that the impression which you made upon me in youth shall never depart, and that the feelings of love, confidence and gratitude, which you have expressed for me, have formed one of the chief joys of my life. Farewell, dear Charlotte! May happy hopes for the coming year be yours, and may blessings light upon you!

Yours, H.

LETTER XXXVIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, January* 31, 1825.

You will be somewhat surprised to receive a letter from me before the usual time. The reason is that I am ill, and being prevented from any serious occupations by a rather severe cold and toothache, I seek consolation and amusement in writing to you. I am very patient under sickness, and cannot prevail upon myself to call illness an evil, which, you will say, I suppose, only proves that I have never, or very seldom, been seriously ill. And in this you would be right, but you must allow that many people make a great clamour about

very little annoyances. When sickness approaches me it ever comes attended with a certain species of rest and serenity to the soul, not that I am without these qualities in good health, but that in a state of good health a man is constantly in an atmosphere of zeal and energy, which fall away in the time of sickness. For the rest be not uneasy respecting my indisposition, it is of no importance, and will most probably leave me in a few days. It is the consequence of a cold wind, to which I could not avoid exposing myself, and the ill effects of which I felt immediately.

My eyes, of which you are kind enough to think so much, are much better, and, indeed, have been quite well this winter, but I still write with caution, and use, as you see, the Roman letters. Let me now, as I very often do to myself, express the pleasure with which I first read your last letter, and read it over and over again, pondering on every word. The great charm of your writings is that natural power which you possess of expressing your feelings in a simple and truthful manner, with the right words. It was my great wish, when we first renewed our acquaintance, that you might become conscious of my hearty sympathy for you, and of the unchangeableness of my affection. This is now, I hope, the case. And it is as well to express this feeling now, at this season of the year's departure, when all our sentiments for those whom we love spring up into a new life. I think much of the epochs of time in my every-day life, and the beginning of a new period is, I confess, with me no ordinary season. Times and seasons are my masters, and conform the flow of my life to their course.

We should ever remember in this human life, that the rush of the tide of time must have an end, for if we once become perfectly conscious of this truth, we shall become perfectly indifferent to pain and pleasure, good fortune and bad fortune. What are good and bad fortune, pain and pleasure, but feathers

in the wing of Time, which he sheds and renews every instant of his flight? What is left of happiness after the departure of its season, and where rests the sting of misery after its night of bitterness? There is a ripening power in this progression, which is of more effect and more beneficial as we reverence and obey it more strictly, regard it as the greatest of finite things, the expression of all finite things, and husband carefully the riches which it contains.

I respect very highly your activity; it does you much honour, and is rewarded by the independence which you again possess after such great misfortunes. Every thing which you tell me of your occupations, interests me very much.

I love above all things the laboriousness of women, and the labours to which they attach themselves direct, and invite, and permit them to live a life of feelings and ideas. To this I attribute the deep, beautiful, earnest disposition which most women enjoy, in so far superior a degree to most men, who may have even enjoyed a far superior education. On women fall domestic anxieties and domestic sorrows, and their souls dwelling in greater seclusion, holding more frequent and earnest communion with themselves than the souls of men, are more susceptible of outward influences. Alas! how easily may their position become one of excessive pain.

It is of infinite importance to a man that he should accustom himself to continual reflection on himself. We may say with equal truth that a man is never ignorant of himself, and never rightly knows himself. He can know no one so intimately, in no one trace so exactly the secret connection between his thoughts and his will, the source of his inclinations and resolutions, as in himself. On the other hand, whatever may be his inclinations, he can never judge himself impartially. In this point he is defective, and nothing, therefore, pleases me more, than that my friends and acquaintance should tell

me of my failings most unreservedly, for I know that their judgments, unless intentionally perverted, must be founded in reason. This is the last day of the month, and the further portion of your biography which you had promised me, and which I had so earnestly hoped to receive, has not yet arrived, and cannot now before the end of the month. You have, I suppose, missed the post, or that may be delayed by the state of the roads at this season of the year. However it may be, I hope to receive it soon. Have I written to you later than the 12th? I think I must have written this month. Write to me, in any case, by return of post, as well as on the 15th. Farewell. Do not, I repeat, allow my indisposition to cause you any annoyance. With entire and unchanging affection, I remain yours, H.

LETTER XXXIX.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, February* 8, 1825.

I have received the further portion of your biography, and the long letter which accompanied it; and intended to write to you to-day as usual, but a visit has taken up my time until now, when there is but a quarter of an hour to the post. But I send you a line partly to assure you of my recovery, and partly because you express so earnest a wish for a letter. I am very grieved to find that my last letter has caused you uneasiness. It is, indeed, a sorrowful thing to me to have caused you sorrow. But I solemnly assure you that no one can be less guilty of wilfully causing you any pain than I; and I had not the most distant idea, that what I expressed with the most perfect freedom, trusting to our high and perfect

confidence, could have been so, forgive the expression, misinterpreted. In all your letters you had imparted to me your feelings so unreservedly, had besought me so continually to direct and instruct you. Had I thought the words could displease you, I should still have depended upon your ability to determine their meaning more exactly. The sense which they were intended to convey was always loving, sympathising, and kind. Ought you now to have allowed yourself to be thus troubled? Would it not have been much better if you had written directly; "I know that you mean well, but I do not like these observations?" Dear Charlotte, be convinced of my unchanged affection: be sure that I never will, that I never could, wish to cause you any annoyance, and confide in me with a trustful heart.—You will have received a second letter from me before I receive yours, which, as you must think, was written in a most truly loving and friendly spirit, but before I knew that the expressions of the previous one had given you offence, and may therefore, as it is in the same strain, give you still further annoyance, which makes me grieve that I wrote it. Your answer, however, must be by this time on its way, and when I have received it, I will write more fully to free myself from all your imputations. I must conclude for the present. Farewell! Drive every lingering sorrow from your heart, and believe that I remain your most sincere friend,

H.

LETTER XL.

DEAREST CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, January* 12, 1825.

Your letter of the 6th has greatly delighted me, for I find by it that I had not offended you irremediably, but had only incurred your temporary displeasure. I was only distressed and uncertain, and my first care was to quiet you, as is evident from my short letter. I was unresolved what to do. Probably my unwillingness to grieve you might have induced me to yield against my own convictions. All this your affectionate letter has prevented. It has pleased me, I repeat, very much, and I return my hearty thanks. If you always remain so good, so conscious of the true and the right, as you now are, and as I know that you will ever remain, you will fulfil that which I promised myself from the commencement of our correspondence, which has already given me so much pleasure, and from which, I feel convinced, I shall receive yet more. I will do as you request with respect to your letter before the last; I will burn it, forget it, never mention it again, and never allow one syllable of it to disturb the pleasure which I take in your other epistles. At the same time I will maintain the tone of mine, and fearlessly and freely express my opinions; it is natural that I should guide, and that you should follow. But it will always rest with you to allow or to deny me this privilege.

My health is perfectly re-established, and I pursue my customary occupations which are peculiarly agreeable to me, as being entirely self-chosen, and connected with general principles. And these pursuits which I have followed through the greater part of my life, have been the source of that tendency to earnestness, reverie, and contemplation, which is so manifest in my disposition. I have reduced all surrounding

things and circumstances to a certain system, which, however, I am so far from declaring to be always right, that I am continually considering every part, anxious to correct any errors which it may contain. But as long as I consider anything to be true, I cannot endure that it should be held to be otherwise in a circle over which I have any influence. I can show the cause of every action, and there is, therefore, ever a reason to be given on which we may rest. For nothing is more disagreeable to me than a mere wild interchange of ideas, a blind and clumsy intercourse. It is not, indeed, possible, to found every action in truth, to take none but the wisest resolutions, but we can approach to this perfection, and it is healthful both for body and mind to remain constant to some rule in even unimportant matters, to resist the guidance of every change of whim, and, be the consequences what they may, to adhere firmly to our resolutions. It is by no means true that such a strictness hinders the outpourings of the spirit, and sets narrow bounds to the feelings. The soul moves with increased confidence in a determined direction, when it finds that it is subject to a strict and careful guidance; and the feelings gain greater strength when they proceed from purified and well-tried sentiments.

Although I have not time at present to speak fully respecting the part of your biography which you last sent me, allow me to assure you of the pleasure which it gave me, and to entreat you to send me the continuation at your earliest convenience. I expect a letter from you in a few days, and pray you to dispatch it on the 26th March. And now farewell, dear Charlotte! Be convinced that you ever possess my heartfelt sympathy. Your health seems to have been improved by the mild winter which we have had; but we should always remember that as we grow older, we shall be more subject to the seasons.

With unchanged affection, I remain yours, H.

LETTER XLI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, March* 8, 1825.

I have been more pleased with your description of your domestic life in the year 1786, than I can express. This portion of your youth passed on without any occurrences of importance, but your power of delineating the inner life of the soul has given to your narration of it a wonderful charm. There are states of feeling which circumstances make interesting, whether they precede, accompany, or arise out of them. Nothing can be more charming than that season of blooming girlhood in which you must have been at this time. I was at that time nineteen years old, and had not left my mother's roof, (my father died of an accident in my twelfth year), and you must, therefore, be about four years younger than I am. This reminds me that I do not know your exact age, which I request you to tell me, for I consider it of great importance to know the ages of my friends, especially of such as are females. I have my own thoughts on women's ages, and prefer those somewhat advanced in years to those who are younger. In my opinion, their personal charms continue to unfold to a much later period than is generally supposed, and that their minds are much improved by years, is manifest. I have never cared to form any intimate friendship with a girl or woman much younger than myself, and certainly would not willingly have married such a one, for I am convinced that such marriages are not good. It generally happens in such cases that the men treat their wives as children, and that the difference of their ages destroys that exalted intercourse, that pure and perfect union of thoughts and feelings, which is the chief blessing resulting from the union of the two sexes. Similarity

in all the conditions of their souls is indispensably necessary, and a man can only find great joy in marriage when his wife agrees, according to the different nature of her soul, with all his thoughts and feelings, and acknowledges his will as her own.

To return to the subject of your biography. It was a peculiar, though in the then undeveloped but developing state of your heart, a natural and amiable trait of your disposition, that you had no longing but for a friend of your own sex. It is very right to distinguish between love and friendship. They share in common that inner life of the soul, wherein two beings having met, each one seems to yield up his own peculiar existence to that of the other, and yet preserves it in a state of greater clearness and purity by the contact. A man needs something without himself, to which he may attach himself; about which he may rally all the powers of his being. And general as this feeling is, it is the peculiar prerogative of a tender contemplative soul to long for true love and friendship. Very few tender, unworldly, and world-fearing dispositions can attach themselves to those which are active and volatile; such opposite dispositions can never be truly united. Love and friendship are altogether different in themselves, and different in all their circumstances. Love has a sensual hue, which is no prejudice to the purity of the soul, for it can possess the greatest purity within itself, and proceeding from the soul itself, is as clear and unspotted. With young women who have not as yet become sensible, or at least conscious, of love, it takes the form of friendship. Their feelings are not sufficiently decided and clear to understand that love which their blooming womanhood scatters all around. The friendship of one young person for another of the same sex, is the more lively, long-suffering, patient, and self-sacrificing: although it leads to the same results in later years, it has a different character in the earlier period of life, when the tinge of sentiment is

more glowing, the soul capable of stronger exertion, and when the light appears warmer and brighter. Thus was it, surely, between you and your friend. I wish very much that you may continue your autobiography. I cannot see that you encounter as yet any difficulty; for the more serious periods, the times of sorrow and grievous trial, are far distant from the present period of your narrative; and when you reach them, you may be quite convinced, dear Charlotte, that I shall leave it entirely to the determination of your own feelings whether or not you will proceed. For it entirely rests with you to decide whether you can bear to consider the occasions and results of wounds, which, however old they be, must still be very painful. Ever remember that in sparing yourself unnecessary pain you spare me. I fear that you work too hard; for my sake avoid this. And now, dear Charlotte, farewell! Think sometimes of me, who think so frequently and affectionately of you. H.

LETTER XLII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, March* 22, 1825.

It is with great pleasure that I sit down to write to you this letter, which I hope from all my heart, you may receive in good and cheerful health; though, indeed, this strange weather, which winter has reserved for its conclusion, is not very likely to bring it. I have been, thank God, perfectly well up to this time, and purpose, if not at Easter, at least immediately after, making an excursion to Tegel. Although we must wait the whole year through for the budding of the trees, yet the expectation is sweet, as all things which are not wrong, because the end of its hope is the source of a remaining good. All the

joys brought by the changing seasons have a moral for the feeling and the grateful heart. That regularity which nature shows in all her works, in her most usual labours, as in the daily rising and setting of the sun, is great and wonderful;—that regularity, I say, with which Nature communicates the benefits which she showers down upon mankind, must fill the mind of every thinking man with an exalting and comforting sentiment of tenderness. In our rude north, indeed, we must purchase the step from winter to spring with violent weather, and await in hope the approach of finer days. But the great change which accompanies the variation of the seasons in our country, has its advantages; for it renders our spirits more earnest and thoughtful when we pass from the darkness of winter, into the mild serenity of spring-tide. And we feel this the more strongly, after passing a few years in a southern clime, where the winter is as our spring, and there are properly but three seasons, that of great heat, or the summer; and that of the ripening of fruits, or the autumn; and the remaining months of the year, like as I have said, our spring, when there is no cold or unpleasant weather, when the grass of the fields and meadows is fresh and green, and but few trees are without their foliage. In such countries, then, where there is no change from winter to spring, the inhabitants are without those sweet and heavenly emotions which this change never fails to excite in our hearts. It is in nature only, however, that I pay any attention to the variations of the seasons; unlike most men, who alter their mode of living with the alteration of the year. I live, a change of residence excepted, in the same manner all the year round, which is the natural consequence of my going out but very little in winter, and continuing my studies almost uninterruptedly; for, with the exception of the hours from three to five, and from eight to ten, you would always find me,

dear Charlotte, busily writing in my study, as the few visits which I make generally take place in the above hours. The farther a man advances in years the more he delights, if his soul have ever been capable of such a delight, in earnest contemplation, which, I may say without exaggeration, is now almost the only charm of my life,—a charm which is increased by the nature of my pursuits, and which a thought, the suggestion of a thought, or even the feeling of a thought ever renews. By this inclination of his mind a man becomes less attractive to others, more bound up in himself; and in this view I am far from unreservedly praising it: he rejects certain things, has an especial inclination and necessity for making his own views dominant, and easily retreats within himself, sometimes when not wishing to do so, if his opinions be not received: he feels, in fact, that he can only proceed on a certain track, and therefore desires that those who would accompany him, should take precisely the same course. All this may have its inconveniences, but whatever is human must have them, and that contemplative life, which determines its own circle, and never goes beyond that circle, has, and preserves its compensation, in the very fact that it cannot be separated from it. Yes, if he indeed reaches the state with which a well-cultivated and profound mind may properly be contented, a man ought surely out of a principle of duty not to forsake it. For, from this pursuit of ideas, commenced according to our own resolves and peculiar choice, there always arises somewhat which works far and powerfully, and unless a man be independent in himself: a free application of his active powers is impossible. You will find, dear Charlotte, from my letter of the 8th, with what joy and interest I read the new chapter of your biography, which very frequently occupies my thoughts. The comparatively few forced marriages in our days prove, I think, that the

world has increased in gentleness and justice. Happiness is now thought more of than outward form and circumstance. And although by this means fallacious and deceptive inclinations may sometimes be acted on, yet on the whole this exercise of mildness and justice, this thought for those for whom the choice is made, is an important advance on former ages. But the worst which can happen in such cases is when, as in the case of your friend, one connection is entered on and another not renounced. For although it be done with the purest feeling of self-sacrifice, and entirely on moral grounds, it is yet an unnatural effort of the mind, and a proceeding which can scarcely hope for that blessing, without which nothing prospers. You do not err in supposing that no such happiness as is hoped for has proceeded from such a second union. The first fascination of love, when the desired union takes place, does not vanish madly, but happily weaves itself into all feelings, and yet is blunted by time. The distance forms images which are never to be realised.

That inner repose is wanting, without which there can be no happiness.

Thus much for to-day, dear Charlotte, for I shall soon write again. With the most affectionate sympathy, I remain yours,

H.

LETTER XLIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, April 6*, 1825.

It was with very great pleasure that I received your copious letter of the 20th, for which I return you my hearty thanks. I arrived here on Thursday the 24th, and found, as I had hoped, a letter from you on the table. I gratefully acknowledge your punctuality and attention to my wishes. It

is very agreeable to me to think that the time when it was necessary for you to make excessive exertions is past, for though your income was increased I was very sorry, although I honoured you for it, to see how greatly you overtasked your strength. I should like to receive in your next letter a full account of your receipts and disbursements; I wish, for I take a lively and affectionate interest in this matter, to know, and to know particularly, how matters go with you in this respect, how secure your position may be; and I should be exceedingly rejoiced if I could make any suggestion, which would point out to you any means of gaining greater leisure; such as would be suitable to your character. This may happen in the course of time; and so agreeable is labour, and so pleasant and beneficial also is leisure, and especially for you who so willingly exist in thought and feeling, and, (through sensible and earnest views of nature, by an unusual power of realisation, and by your original destination,) can so thoroughly avail yourself of leisure,—a power commonly to be found in women in the highest degree, but never so entirely in men. I have spoken to you without any circumlocution, with that unreserve which you permit, and even demand. I am conscious of feeling for you the most hearty sympathy and affection, and know that what I do is done with right intentions. If you have other views, that does not surprise me, because different positions naturally present different prospects. It rather increases my thankfulness, my regard, my innermost esteem for you, that, as is always the case with a woman of fine and noble sentiment, you are ready to submit your views to the direction of him whom you earnestly esteem. I am therefore exceedingly pleased that you follow my wishes in this respect, and expressly *say* that you *obey* me;* and I will repeat, without any attempt at conceal-

* It was not very difficult for me to yield to this fancy of an honoured friend.—A. d' H.

ment, for I always express myself to you unreservedly, that, incomprehensible as it may be to you, not only the fact but the very word, and all its attendant circumstances, delight me exceedingly; and that, not merely the submission of will and obedience, but also the willing expression of these sentiments, exhibits to me a woman's character in its fairest, noblest light, affording, as it does, certain evidence that she possesses sufficient confidence in her worth not to fear the loss of any of her dignity by such a subjection. You wish to know where I passed the year 1786, and the following years. I lived in Berlin, with my mother, in the winter, and with my younger brother, under the care of a tutor, in the summer, when it was our custom to visit Tegel on Sunday. This was my life until the August of 1788, when I went with my brother and the same tutor to Frankfort on the Oder, where there was then a university, at which place we staid until the Easter of 1789. At that time I went with my tutor, but without my brother, to Göttingen, where our tutor left us, and from that period, my 22nd year, I lived alone. In the same year, a time which I love to remember, I saw you in Pyrmont. The companion whom I brought with me, was connected with me by no ties but those of chance.

At Easter my brother followed me to Göttingen, and soon after Midsummer I went to Paris with the now deceased Campe, who had been my first tutor, and had taught me reading and writing when I was three years old; we separated at Mayence, and I went on to Switzerland, returned to my mother at the close of the year, took leave of her again in 1791, and married. Thus passed those years with me, whose dealings with you you have so kindly promised to relate.

I long since resolved to say a word to you why painting is especially suitable to your disposition. The reason is, that you possess a most singularly beautiful female character.

Unless we possess a soul rich in feelings and ideas, and therefore of an exquisite and tender organisation, we cannot perceive that accord from other souls which sweeps around us, whilst with such a soul we may discover and develope the least perceptible tones. This is a privilege, a talent, a natural gift, but is perfected by early exertions, by self-conquest, by hatred of every thing ignoble, by pure morality and simple but earnest piety. In this respect you are especially profound, and unite to the spiritual nature of your soul a high talent for writing and description. Thus I explain to myself the facts which are manifest thoughout all your letters, and every portion of your autobiography.

Tegel 14.

I have been at this place for some few days alone, having left my family during this violent, stormy weather, in town. The storms and rain are, indeed, remarkably heavy, but I am very happy, and shall be more so when I have my wife and children with me again. In spite of the badness of the weather I walked out both yesterday and to-day, and find that one suffers less from the storms in the woods, about sunset, for they generally subside about this time, and the rain is checked more easily by the tops of the trees. Enough for to-day. Farewell! With unchangeable sympathy and affection, yours,

H.

LETTER XLIV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, May* 1, 1825.

I have read with much pleasure your letter of the 19th April, for I have found there many and strong proofs of that affection which I prize so much; and will answer it sentence by sentence. You are right in telling me that we

did not meet in Pyrmont in 1789,—it was a year earlier, for I went to Göttingen the Easter of the same year. I had no idea that you were betrothed the same year, but thought that it had been much later. With respect to Campe, however, I am not in error. He was tutor, or rather governor, to an elder step-brother of mine, my mother's son by her first marriage. He also taught me reading and writing, and must have left our house about 1770 or 1771, near the time of your birth. No doubt you were very fond of the little books he wrote for children. After he left us, he became a pastor, but soon left his cure, and entered with Basedow the Philanthropic Institution at Dessau. But his journey to Paris, in which I accompanied him, was in the year 1789, after that we had seen each other. Since that time I never met with him again. I am reminded of this year by another circumstance, which is, that in Jacobi's published correspondence, there is a letter from him to Lavater, to whom he recommended me in 1789, in which year also I made a tour in Switzerland. It is a great pleasure to me to live the past over again. I have scarcely forgotten the least thing which ever befel me, and especially cherish the remembrance of those persons with whom circumstances have connected me. At the time of which I speak, I had a kind of passion for becoming acquainted with remarkable men, for enquiring narrowly into the dispositions of their minds, for treasuring up the results of these observations. By this means I acquired a knowledge of human nature, which ordinary experience would not have given even at a much later age. All my endeavours were directed to the acquisition of this knowledge. I brought the particularities of the objects of my study under general divisions, classed them, compared them, studied their physiognomy, and, in short, made of it, as it were, a regular science, which I found of great use in my life in the world. I have learned to view

men as they are; to attribute to all men their real dispositions; and that, I repeat, which in my youth was a simple exercise, in my age I have found a support. I no longer follow this pursuit, for when a man has reached my years, he neither can nor wishes to make these nice observations and distinctions. A man must then freely exhibit his own individuality, must exercise it openly in the case of those with whom he is intimately associated, and be contented to show to others an ordinary civility.

You express your surprise at the rapid approach of spring this year; and I share it with you, for I have never in my whole life experienced so sudden a change of season. A large old cherry-tree in my garden, which, in the evening was quite bare, was covered the next morning with leaves.

Your sorrowful emotions at this, the period of Nature's resurrection, are common to all who think carefully and deeply, without by any means injuring the pleasure with which they greet her on arising from her long sleep. The sadness of these emotions is the result of their earnestness, for all the earnest emotions of humanity are sad. And very naturally; for it feels its weakness, the subjection of its being to continual change; and cannot but feel deep emotions, which must express themselves in a sorrowful joy, when it beholds in this development and exertion of Nature for its gratification, an eternal goodness continually surrounding and watching over the care-beset and danger-beset course of its existence.

Another and far keener kind of sorrow enters our souls at the birth of so much life, which, if it be not human, is still no less life, for the thought arises, that winter will soon be upon them, and that they must quickly die. The instability of all life is never so manifest to our minds as at the change of the seasons. The sight of the joyous life of the world of leaves and flowers, so free from any trace of winter, is as

deeply moving as the sight of a child, who knows not care, —whom care knows not.

Farewell! With most sincere, most unchangeable affection, believe me yours, H.

LETTER XLV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, May 15, 1825.*

Much as I love Nature, and hold communion with her, I have been but little in the open air since my residence here. If no one pays me a visit, which in this cold weather is seldom the case, I usually go out of doors from six to eight in the evening, which I prefer to the morning on account of the sunset, which I never, if possible, miss seeing. I have always liked sunset better than sunrise; the cause of which is, most probably, that at evening one's daily labours being ended, the mind at ease, is more readily impressed with the beauties of nature. I work all day long in my library, which on the south and west sides looks over the garden to the tall trees beyond. My self-chosen studies have become, as it were, (for my real labours occupy but little of my time,) a part of my very existence. My books, ideas, contemplations, and the experiences from which they spring, occupy me continually and exclusively, and I can safely say that I owe to them, if not entirely, certainly for the most part, this happy and serene being. The only reason for which I prize my position is that I can give myself up to them. But even when, as was the case during the long years of my public life, I had not the leisure which I now enjoy, I did not feel the less, that I derived the evenness and placidity of my disposition, which is naturally the source of gentleness to our fellow-creatures, from

this tendency of my mind to alienate itself from the littleness of the world. For when a pure and conscious soul is compelled by circumstances to come into contact with others, its ideas remain as the ravine through which a river flows, and preserves its tranquil purity. This is ever the disposition of pious men, and when it is free from all hypocrisy and self-deception, and founded in truth and humility, is a disposition which leads to unequalled, to perfect repose. If a man once accustoms himself to this life in his own thoughts, he is proof against the stings of sorrow and misfortune. If he be sorrowful, his sorrow will be obedient to the voice of patience and of reason. I connect, according to a long formed habit, this reflection with my learned occupations, but I continually seek in that, and in every thing, to acquire fresh ideas, which may in their turn unite themselves with all which derives its worth and charm, either from that which is not visible, or which, being actual, is so in the purest and most scientific sense. In this higher region are the ideas which, as also learned pursuits, appearing only fitted for the few, are very simple and connected with general humanity. I am pleased with the thought that you will receive this letter at Whitsuntide. With unchangeable affection,

Yours, H.

LETTER XLVI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, May*, 21, 1825.

The marriage of the Princess Louisa has compelled me to spend some days in town, but as I am so fond of the country I shall leave Berlin almost immediately, and shall, therefore, be able to send you but a very short letter to-day. I was glad to find my expectation that I should receive a letter

from you to-day, gratified by yours of the 15th. My grief that you have been, and perhaps still are suffering from low spirits, is accompanied with joy that you write to me so frankly.

Whitsuntide, above all other festivals, fills the soul with joy, exalts it, turns it away from the contemplation of the little concerns of the world to higher and better hopes, and confirms it in worthy resolutions. Festivals, by their origin, and by the circumstances to the commemoration of which they are consecrated, ever give an increase of devotion to earnest activity and worthy efforts. But religious considerations apart, they are pleasant divisions in the year, whose long uniformity would otherwise be wearisome. Life appears longer when it is divided into small portions, and this is not merely a deception of the imagination. But were it indeed only that, we ought not to prize it the less. Simple reality would be very mean without the charm of imagination, which, allowing that it brings in its train unreal terrors as well as vain hopes, generally, although in this it may be very deceptive, lends to the objects which it presents before the mind bright and cheerful colours. It generally, also, depends on ourselves to allow or reject its influence; but not entirely. In earnest dispositions it is the chief feeling on which all others more or less depend. If this is light and cheerful, it gives such a tone to the whole mind; if clouded with cares, it, in like manner, renders the soul heavy and melancholy.

The question which you put, "how far our love for another may extend, and remain pleasing to God," is a very important moral question, and one which you have answered very well, but you have still, I think, left some of its points untouched. In the first place nothing can displease God which is done with noble, pure, and moral feelings; and this must certainly be your opinion likewise. The Godhead has therein the moral knowledge and especially the moral feeling, which,

making still nicer distinctions, rejects that which mere knowledge would not disapprove. If we would go still farther, that there may be unallowed things, against which morality says nothing, there would appear to me in that either an excess or a deficiency in fineness of moral feeling. I hold that nothing is displeasing to God which is consistent with pure moral feeling. But man can only judge respecting human matters. For my own part I cannot conceive that a man need fear loving any created being more than God. God will be loved by us in his creatures according as we feel and act towards them. An idolatrous love is an expression which answers to no actual idea. No sensible man can compare in any way the highest being with one of his own weak and perishable fellow-creatures. Such a comparison could only result from the most unbridled passion, a passion which could not submit unscathed to the test of free, purified, and spotless feeling. Every thing returns to this point. But you must understand that by moral feeling I mean one which is thoroughly imbued with the most sincere and genuine piety. For there might be a morality perfectly distinct from religion. And, moreover, I do not mean any obscure feeling. It must be a feeling founded on knowledge and piety, and to distinguish it a little further, we may observe that, in a song, music which is felt ever adds something to the dry meaning of the words. An affection favoured by such feelings need not anxiously to prescribe to itself limits. To whatsoever degree it may reach, it still remains a pure and pious disposition which will never confuse the Creator with the creature, and will never prove unfaithful to the former. That the Deity can every day remove the object of such an inclination is indeed certain; and if the inclination be what I have described it, such a circumstance will profoundly afflict him who is inspired by this sentiment, but it will not rob him of his self-possession. The disposition itself could not be

associated with a moral and religious feeling, if it did not imply that, in untoward circumstances, it would be attended with a humble resignation to the will of Providence. All the rest seems to explain itself.

To occupy myself with the past has ever been my favourite pursuit. That which in times gone by has influenced the soul, and has been really considered and felt by it, has a great influence also on its present thoughts, feelings, and desires.

The intimate connection of all the phases of a man's life is one of the most incomprehensible and wonderful parts of his nature. It cannot for a moment be supposed that all thoughts and feelings will maintain an equal place in the soul; but whilst one affects the mind in a more especial manner, the others sound as connected chords. In this manner, then, may all the past circumstances of a man's life be obvious to him as the present, and all his former actions have a much closer connection than is commonly supposed with his present.

With that which springs from any deep sentiment no particular design is ever connected; but we may be described as fanatical and extravagant by cold and tranquil men, because our feelings pass the limits of ordinary experience; while sentiment, without losing any of its tenderness, may really become stronger.

LETTER XLVII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, July* 16, 1825.

I should have written to you the day before yesterday, if I had not waited for your letter, thinking that you would rather have an immediate answer to that; and now that I know its contents, I am doubly pleased that I took this resolution, for I have little doubt that I shall be able to clear up many difficulties, and clearness is always rest, or the source of rest. Let me give you many thanks for your letter which I received yesterday, and for the expressions of love and confidence which it contains, and which I assure you I value as they deserve. You may be convinced that although very far from making the least complaint against you in the inmost recesses of my heart, I thoroughly understand your disposition, and recognise with lively thankfulness your singularly true and firm affection. You may gather from my letters, that I enter into all your ideas, am anxious to solve your doubts, and to answer your questions; and if I do not do it out of gratitude, but out of real inclination and interest, that will be to you perhaps a better proof of my thankfulness. I do not as yet, and never can forget, that you have preserved through a long life your first feelings of affection in my behalf, and disclose to me unreservedly your innermost feelings. This, as I have so often said, is a treasure which few men possess. I am sorry to find that you complain of presentiments and low spirits, which, as you rightly suppose, have no effect upon me, and of which you must strive to think in like manner. I ascribe this mournful disposition, which proceeds in part from the state of your bodily health, to your excessive exertions during last winter. We should not forget that one must be

brought up, nay even born to them, to endure with impunity such uninterrupted exertions. And we well know that neither of these cases can apply to you. You opposed the idea of living at leisure; your present position was the result of a severe destiny, and you had to endure it at a period of life when the fresh energies of youth had departed. Although I honour exceedingly your perseverance and resolution, it grieves me much that it is so, and that you have not gained a total change of situation, as some recompense for your losses. I cannot, if you only rightly understand me, occasion your low spirits; you must see from every line of my letters, that you have my hearty sympathy and good wishes; that I do not wish you altered in any respect; that it greatly delights me to find you becoming happier and more cheerful; that I shall ever have great pleasure in furthering, as far as my circumstances,—I might say my years permit,—your welfare; and that it is very easy for me to disabuse your mind of any contrary supposition. Never doubt this I beseech you! For it would be a peculiarly unhappy circumstance, if you were to create cares for yourself out of nothing, to grieve for imaginary griefs. Nothing, it appears to me, can be clearer than the character of our recollections. Your own feelings you must know best yourself; but for myself I may say, that I have preserved unto this time the feelings and sentiments which were excited by our first meeting, casual and temporary as it was; that it is a great joy to me to have this opportunity of expressing them, and that I find, as must be manifest to you, an inexpressible pleasure in this our mutual intercourse of mental experience. This calm and beautiful friendship, so suitable as it is to my age and inclination, may continue as long as our lives; there is no reason on my side why it should not, and, as far as I can see, none on yours. Be satisfied, as I am convinced you safely may be,

that the connection between us must ever be considered as earnest and ingenuous, as it really is. Besides which, you must never for a moment suppose that the obligation is wholly on your side; for, as I have often observed, I receive great satisfaction from your letters; your natural womanly expressions of submission, and your autobiography. Believe me: you can give me especial satisfaction by this; and you have seen that I can express myself to you naturally and unreservedly. If you think differently, I will immediately yield the point, and that without any bitterness, any complaint, with the simple feeling, as I have before said, that two people cannot think altogether alike. Thus lightly should you also, dear Charlotte, treat things which may not be quite in accordance with your wishes. The happiest life has so much shade, that we should take care not to render our existence darker than it really is. Such an error in feeling is not wilful; but yet one may strive against it.

This needs self-government, but that, indeed, is necessary to all men. I have now been so explicit, my dear friend, that I cannot in any way appear to you mysterious or unintelligible. I must correct one passage in your letter, where you say that I need nothing for my happiness but myself, and which shows that you have quite misunderstood me. It is indeed in many respects true. But however severely I examine myself I cannot find anything to blame in this. It is, in fact, the fruit of a long life directed to that end. I live in my feelings, studies, and ideas; it is by them that I am enabled to depend but little on outward things; that I learn to direct my thoughts to that which is imperishable; that I bear up against the misfortunes which have so frequently attacked me. By this sort of independence alone can a man become free from egotism, for, by having few wants of his own, he can find more leisure to attend to those of others. Every joy is greater as it is not the satisfaction of a want, but a pure and beautiful addition to

his being. Every thing which we need has the peculiarity of being desired with more pain while absent, than enjoyed when present. I feel—experience has taught me this—more sorrow at the loss of a friend than is usual with other men, but bear it more calmly. I do not consider sorrow as altogether opposed to happiness, but have frequently experienced the one when in company with the other. This was my meaning by that which you misunderstood, and if you will carefully peruse my letter, you will find that it is there very clearly expressed. I can scarcely believe that it is possible to avoid allowing particular passages to bear a different meaning to that which they were intended to convey: one cannot define every thing. If you say that the word *inconsequent* is not agreeable to your ears, you are thinking, doubtless, of an often misused word. The true *consequence* is certainly not offensive to you; you reverence it as much as I do. It is, in fact, but the pure result of well-known principles. Farewell! Confide in the unchangeablenes of my affection; dismiss from your thoughts every unreal care; bear calmly those which are real. Remember that by so doing you please me very much. Heartily yours,

H.

LETTER XLVIII.

Burgörner, August 18, 1825.

I HAVE been at this place for some days, and rejoice very much that I live in a province, and in a part of the country which is far from any great towns. For I much prefer such places to all others. I have no curiosity to know the news, and do very well without the papers. My occupations proceed in a perfectly uniform manner, and, as far as possible, in the same

direction. I have ever been inclined to engage deeply in one pursuit, and have frequently experienced the advantages and disadvantages of such a course. For that this love for one and the same occupation, that this attachment to one dominant idea has a cramping and injurious influence, cannot be denied. Excessive intensity of research has the same influence as a continual distraction of mind: both habits prevent us from observing much, compel us to let much slip by unexamined. There is, indeed, a grand difference between them, for whilst the frivolous mind gains nothing, the deeply thinking soul possesses the one object of its research, frequently a sufficient compensation for the loss of all other knowledge. I feel this inclination to surrender myself exclusively to one thing, which is, then, for the most part, a single idea, in the highest degree, when I am alone with Nature. I love her infinitely, and the enjoyment of even a simple scene in the open country, not to speak of that which is beautiful, has an inexpressible charm for me. But the impression also which Nature makes always connects itself again with the thoughts which are inwardly occupying me, and changes itself into a general sentiment: on the contrary, a number of individual things elude my grasp. I should never have been a good observer of nature, but should have passed without observation much amongst plants and stones, which at another time I should have cherished. However, I should not willingly allow this my inclination to deep thought to decrease, and should not merely be unwilling to exchange it with the opposite extreme, but should also be as discontented with that middle path, so generally considered the golden mean. A man learns, moreover, to know those things the best to which he attaches himself so exclusively, and the longer we consider them the clearer they appear. One cannot, indeed, say that the things of the world, as far as we now see them, exhibit their real nature. One

man sees that which another overlooks; and it is as if the eye, when sharpened by practice, itself evolved the object. The simplest things can occupy him, who has such an inclination, for a long period, and neither vainly nor uselessly. I especially find it continually to be the case, in this persevering observation, if it concern not merely our ideas, but the objects of the world, that that which time has wrought in them, the trace of the past in the present, nay even the bare anticipation of the future which is opposed to the present, all rise to view. It is in this that its greatest charm consists. For every thing which represents the course and uninterrupted flight of time, is inexpressibly attractive to humanity. And this is very natural, for man is himself a creature of time, over which his fate sweeps him as over a restless sea, giving him no certainty for the present, or confidence in the future. But strength against adverse circumstances is the least advantage which we owe to this earnest spirit of inquiry. For you might perhaps reply, that there are very few things which are worthy such a display of power. The much more important of its advantages is that good which the spirit gains from this direction of all its energies to one point, this habit of contentment with few objects. For from this disposition must necessarily arise a greater sense of spiritual existence, a warmth of feeling and love with which a man may surround himself, and feel, as it were, alone in the world. An influence is thereby exercised upon the character itself, or rather, since nothing comes from without, this tendency being a property of the character itself, the latter is thus developed more and more, and yielding to the favourable impression, acquires a higher dignity and more permanent beauty.

For there are ideas with which it has grown up, which it will never resign, which accompany it as continual guides, friends, comforters; and these ideas are so peculiar to it,

that another mind can frequently never, and generally not until after many years have elapsed, understand and comprehend them, the reason of which is, not that they are too high or too perplexed, as is commonly supposed, but that they are so inseparably united with the mind of another. In ideas of this kind I could never sacrifice even the very least without a perfect change of my early convictions. Nothing could compensate for such a renunciation, and whatever the sacrifice made to preserve an idea thus deepened into conviction, it can never be too great. The firmness, however, which this displays, is no vain one; it proceeds from no mere pride of understanding, since, although it is in itself the offspring of the intellect, ardour, sentiment, and love, will be found peculiarly to exist in a mind which is thus disposed. The whole being is rendered more earnest by this disposition, and, as I have often experienced, remains firmly fixed, in spite of all external commotions, where it has once been really naturalised. It renders those who possess it independent of all outward circumstances, and especially diminishes the necessity of a connection with outward objects. For the love excited by the simple internal idea supplies their place. But wherever any reality is united with an idea, the effect is doubly lasting and effective. The ideas which accompany life throughout are naturally those which best prepare him who possesses them to dispense with life, since life is especially valuable only through them. They are, however, firmly associated with the profoundest faculties of the mind and of the soul. I cannot at all comprehend how the peculiar nature of man can ever do without them. It is well to hope and to expect with confidence, that they will hereafter surround the soul in a clearer, brighter, and more manifold manner.

I have been rejoiced to find from your letters that you have become calmer and happier, and are willing to acknowledge

that I am anxious that you should be so. I have, certainly, only experienced for you the very great affection which I now do, since we renewed our correspondence, but you may be quite sure that I ever remain steadfast in my friendships. The principles on which I act are founded neither on caprice, nor selfishness. It has very much delighted me to find in you, as in other respects, a full and firm trust in those feelings which are consecrated by benevolent sympathy. Persevere, dearest Charlotte, unceasingly in this course, and you will never find anything to disturb our friendship.

That you are a determined enemy to whatever is consequential, when it is nothing but self-will, and is only the semblance of a nobler reality, is well deserving of praise. Such pretensions are highly culpable. But we must not always consider that as pretence, of which we do not see the reason, or which rests upon grounds which, if seen, are yet not explicable. That would be to fall into another extreme. Still less ought we to call a man consequential because he perseveres in his own opinions, which others may have changed and no longer regard as true. It would be nothing but stubbornness or weakness to refuse to acknowledge before others that we were formerly wrong. If we ourselves feel this, we can have no difficulty in allowing the same to others. I have not the least sympathy with those who think that we ought to be so locked up, once for all, in our principles, notions, and sentiments, and who suppose that they must all necessarily be right because we have held them so long. I rather prefer to put all things continually again to the proof, and I would not for a moment conceal it, if that to which I had formerly most inclined appeared suddenly to me in another light. I should then not only lay aside my former opinion, but acknowledge that I had done so without any hesitation. But when a man is so characterised, it is scarcely obvious among others, for he is

then entirely devoted to meditation, and the reasons and opinions which he holds attach themselves to that reflection which a man is not disposed to exchange for the thoughts of another, however strong the proofs may be which the latter brings to justify his opinions. You say that during the last week you have contemplated your own being very earnestly, and directed your attention to the very depths of your spirit. You cannot but have derived great benefit from the investigation. Such self-inquiry always bestows on me a feeling of repose, not lightly to be disturbed. One finds either that the condition of the disposition is such, that it is only necessary to preserve it as it is, and that nothing is necessary for our full enjoyment but more light and clearness, more ability to unfold its intricacies. Such certainly is the case with you. Or else the inquirer finds much cause for complaint, for discontent: if so, he straightway proceeds to purify his mind of evil, error and weakness, and finds a real enjoyment in the feeling that he is returning to the right way. Farewell! Be calm, and ever confident of my unchanging, unchangeable affection.

H.

LETTER XLIX.

Burgörner, September 6, 1825.

I BEGIN my letter at midnight, but as this is Tuesday, it will not go by the post until Friday. It is always my habit, a habit which I cannot entirely praise, to write according to my inclination, and not according to the arrangements of the post. In respect to confidential letters, such as ours, this is not good, for it is naturally very desirable that such letters should come to the hands of those for whom they are intended as soon as

possible. But there is no harm in allowing letters, which have no connection with the feelings, to remain for some days unsent: it may even be advantageous, as it allows of their being altered.

Your observations respecting the influence of a quicker or slower flow of blood on the disposition, are perfectly correct, and similar to those of others. It is, however, a beautiful peculiarity in the economy of man, a privilege enjoyed by none of the other orders of creation, that he is ever conscious of a mental power over the influences of his senses, however violent they may be. An inner voice tells man that he is free and independent, charges him with his good and bad actions, and from this judgment on himself, which must always be sterner and severer than that of others, one must always banish all corporeal influences. There are two distinct dominions, that of freedom, and that of slavery, and we cannot free ourselves by our own unassisted understandings from the war which is continually waged between them. In the world of vision all things are so chained together that if we knew all circumstances, from the least to the most remote, we should be able to prove that we are every moment necessitated so to act as we have acted. Still we have ever the feeling that if we seized upon the wheel, and were willing to free ourselves from those fetters of our condition, we should be able to do so. In this feeling of his freedom consists the dignity of man. But there is that also by which he passes from another world into this, for whilst nothing earthly can be free, nothing celestial can be enchained. This conflict can only be set at rest by allowing the lordship of the whole province of freedom to prevail over the whole province of dependence. We cannot understand this in separate and individual objects, but the concatenation of things, from the beginning, leads to effects which show that in the end they must answer to the free determination of the will.

The state of your bodily health, dear Charlotte, is a matter of great consequence with me. Be careful above all things to be composed. This is, I know, easier said than done; but a man may do much in this respect if he will only observe carefully all that which causes him pain, and it is very probable that he will find by such an inquiry much cause for contentment, or even for thankfulness. If the soul can once succeed in banishing all sickness to the body, a great point is gained, and thenceforth corporeal pain not merely becomes supportable, but even brings a certain composure to the soul. I have been twice dangerously ill, but have never suffered from a weak constitution. I have, however, frequently met with men and women who were daily ill, and never hoped to escape their miseries but by death. Of this number was Schiller, who suffered much, and was always confident, as it really came to pass, that death alone would put an end to his miseries. But we may truly say of him that he preserved his mind free from every malady, for at whatever hour one might visit him, he was cheerful and ready for either simply interesting or earnest discourse. He was even accustomed to say that one could work better when suffering from a certain degree of pain, if it were not excessively violent; and I have seen him under the most distressing circumstances composing poems and essays, to which one would certainly not attribute such an origin.

I can easily comprehend that an agitation of the blood, sorrow and anxiety, joined to great weakness, might produce a weariness of life, but such a feeling should be combated with all the energies of the soul. I will not insist on this as an ordinance of religion, but simply on the grounds that life, even in its utmost extent, is so short, in comparison with eternity, which is wholly veiled to us as regards the nature of our being, that we must take care not to limit it by our wishes, but to

allow it to continue as it will, for really the manner in which a man views his fate is more important than what his fate is. It is a saying, that every one creates his own fortunes, and, indeed, we make them good or bad by our reason or our folly. One may, however, so receive his lot as ordained by Providence, and so adapt himself to it, as to find it good, however opposite it may seem.

Remember me kindly, and be sure that it is ever thus that I remember you. I think of you oftener than you suppose.

Yours, H.

If you write to me before the 20th I shall receive your letter here: if later at Berlin,

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LETTER L.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Burgörner, September* 26, 1825.

I return you my most hearty thanks for your letters of the 4th and 6th. I have perceived, however, with some pain, that you repeat your complaints of a weary lack of every pleasant feeling, and beseech me to bear with you as with a sick person. Do not, I entreat you, dear Charlotte, allow such a thought to trouble you for an instant. You need no consideration at my hands, as the tone of your letter is in no way displeasing to me, but as it is a sign that you suffer. Make no apology on this account.

I had earnestly wished that you might pass the rest of your days in serene contentment. But I can well comprehend how a series of great misfortunes may shake the mind, and am exceedingly delighted with the confidence with which you describe to me your attacks of low spirits. It is my firm belief

that we have it very much in our own power to repel, or at least to alleviate the evils of such a disposition. But I am perfectly willing to allow that what is quite possible, or even easy, to one man under certain circumstances, may be almost impossible to another in others. No mention must ever be made of disgusts, but of an upright submission to existing circumstances. I am however convinced that things will very shortly improve. If you permit me to advise you, take care when you are attacked with low spirits to turn away your thoughts from their inward contemplations to the observance of outward objects; I do not speak of your usual occupations, but of any others that may suit your taste, for this, as you very rightly observe, is the best protection against the disposition of which we speak, and which I understand very well from your description of it, as a dry, unfruitful temper, a misery altogether distinct from any deep, particular sorrow, or generally unhappy position. The latter is the more affecting, the more distressing to the mind, but brings in its train the antidote to its own poison, from which arises a violent but quickly decided contest, most elevating and purifying to the soul. The unfruitful vexation must, on the contrary, find something to act upon it from without, and give it movement and activity, and this is by so much the more difficult as the gloomy feeling itself guards the entrance.

There are, however, two objects which ever find a ready reception with such dispositions; love of nature and contemplation. You will here ask, perhaps, what I mean by ideas, for you have already said in your letters that I have left you in uncertainty on this point. By ideas I here understood nothing but an earnest occupation with one's inner being, deep contemplation. This contemplation can proceed from and attach itself to everything; but its aim, the point to which it ever tends is always one and the same, namely, the general end

of humanity, and its position in that moment, when every thing earthly shall pass away and lose its value, and only that spirit remain which can but be considered human as humanity is regarded in its highest light. The soul traces the events in its own private existence, the occurrences of the world as they pass before it, and its reminiscences, through all their successive developments to their first causes; investigates their apparent or probable consequences; and pauses, at length, at the consideration of their real value. When therefore I speak so pointedly of being employed about ideas, of penetrating into their meaning, I intend nothing individual, but the occupation which we have in reflection, the separating of things from their mere appearance, the examination of ourselves and others, and the collecting the sum of all our thoughts, upon that which alone is intrinsically excellent, which cannot perish in perishable man, because it proceeds not from man, and which according to just measurement, is such, that man should altogether and irrespectively devote himself to its service. I am not speaking of merely scientific pursuits. For although these may collect and prepare subjects for reflection, may guide and purify it, they cannot affect its final end. True, healthful reflection, needs only the natural powers of the soul. It can attain to any height, since the threads of human fate, to which every thing is bound, may be taken up by every man; and the ideas which are thereby excited exist in every one, in the unlearned as well as in the learned, only in various degrees of clearness and precision. Hence to consecrate ourselves to this species of reflection, we require not so much profound powers of intellect, as a mind strengthened and purified by the banishment of all unholy desires, by the rejection of all that is little, by indifference to pleasure and outward fortune, and by self-control. But the employment of the powers of the understanding has the same beneficial influence on the inner

man, as the sun on nature. They disperse the clouds from the mind, enlighten and warm the spirit, and gradually bring it to a state of perfect repose. If I am put out of temper by anything, (which seldom happens more than twice or thrice a-year,) or am ill, my surest way of getting rid of both evils is by applying to some rather difficult study. By that state which you call in your letter "joylessness," you understand, it appears to me, not so much an absence of all cause for joy as a want of susceptibility to joy. You ask me whether I have ever experienced such a disposition of mind. I have not. Men who have most of their wishes gratified, as is the case, for the most part, with me, frequently lose their relish for pleasure, exchanging it for a feeling of indifference. But this has never been so with me. I can say, on the contrary, with the utmost sincerity and thankfulness, verified by my daily experience, that in every object in nature I can find something to love, some cause for joy, a love and a joy which, so far from being injured by frequent repetition, ever become the more lively, the more soul-felt.

I hope in a few days to receive a letter from you, and shall therefore leave my own unsealed for the present. I hope and expect that you will write to me very frequently, confiding to me all your sorrows, for whose alleviation I am so anxious, and which have already lasted too long.

I have decided on dispatching my letter at once, instead of awaiting yours as I had at first proposed, for I know that my reflections will console you as being a proof of that sympathy with which I regard you so unchangeably. Yours, H.

LETTER LI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE,

I received your letter of the 20th, just when mine had been posted for you. I write to you however at the moment, although it must be very briefly. No matter. I thank you from my heart that you confide in me as openly and freely as I had expected. Yes, my dear friend, I have for many weeks past known all the emotions of your soul; and I judged wrongly when I thought that in so deep a mind as yours anything could be lost. You explain to me most clearly all the causes of your late distress. You cannot overcome the painful feeling, that you cannot return "the least happiness for the abundance which you receive," as you kindly express it. And you, finally, grieve, that you have deprived yourself of that loftier spirit, which you might have obtained, had you resigned yourself unreservedly to my guidance. You attribute your sufferings, without attempting to justify them, to the excitability of your nervous system, which has been so long and so deeply shaken; and affectionately acknowledge, as I anticipated would be the case, that although you could never bring yourself to promise a decided acquiescence, you never gave up the idea of complying with my wishes. Through all that may have arisen, the deeply sad feelings which have overpowered you, dear, good Charlotte, I have recognised for many weeks past all these emotions of your mind, and may say, with perfect sincerity, that the knowledge has only increased the earnest respect with which I ever regard you. These emotions are but the natural fruit of a noble womanly disposition. In these consist their value; and I thank you from my heart that you esteem me so highly as not to conceal from me these secrets of

your soul. I have now to prefer my request to you. I repeat what I have so often said, that none of my feelings are changed in respect to you; that I ever regard you with lively interest, in word and deed. It would be sad indeed if you could never regain the trustfulness of your heart. I feel convinced that that must return with your beautiful happy contentment. Glad indeed should I be to assist you, but you must do your own part, and above all things resist those sad presentiments to which you have given up your mind, generally so pious and trustful, so ready to remember that not only its actions but its feelings also are tried by an invisible Judge.

By attending to, thinking on, and following my wishes and counsel, you will do me a great favour. Farewell! Pardon the shortness of my letter, for I am on the point of leaving, and wish you to direct your next letter to Berlin.

Yours, with unchangeable affection, H.

P. S. You mention an idea, an hypothesis you call it, in your last letter, to which you are very much attached. You know how much interest I take in ideas, and how especially interesting I consider yours. I pray you to write as soon as possible all you have to say on that subject. I should like to have, as I have already said so frequently, an exact knowledge of all your ideas, and consider the confidence with which you impart them to me as a very great privilege.

LETTER LII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, October* 17, 1825.

Soon after my return to this place, which was at the beginning of October, I received your letter, for the contents of which, so entirely answering as they do my expectations, I return you my most cordial thanks. I felt quite certain that you would be so kind as to comply with my request, and will now leave that subject for something else, but must express the pleasure with which I find that your health is improving, and that you have at length consulted a physician. Follow his counsels when not excessively repugnant to you. Sickness of mind, which, however, I am far from attributing to you, disappears of itself, and that very speedily. So clear and vigorous a soul as yours, may be easily healed of any infirmity by earnest and vigorous self-management. God has endowed men with free-will that they may receive or reject the good and the evil according to the suggestions of prudence.

You have, doubtless, observed the beauty of the stars in the eastern hemisphere, during the last days of September and the first of October; three planets and a star of the first magnitude, Mars and Jupiter in the Lion, and Venus as the morning star near Sirius, being close together. I mention it, that, if you have not already observed it, you may not lose this glorious spectacle, which is most beautiful between three and four in the morning, at which time almost every day my wife and I have arisen to view it, always tearing ourselves away from its contemplation with difficulty. From my youth I have loved to contemplate the stars. In this, as in most of our other sentiments, my wife and I perfectly agree. It has been my constant habit to devote some portion of time, more or less, every clear night, to the contemplation of the skies,

and scarcely has any season been more favourable than this wonderfully clear and beautiful autumn. I cannot say, in respect to the stars, that the view of their infinity, and of the immeasurable space which they occupy, fills me with rapture; it rather, indeed, perplexes the mind; and in this view of the numberless and the infinite in space, lies much which certainly depends only upon human fancy, and not upon eternal truth. Still less do I consider them in connection with the life hereafter. But the simple thought, that they are so far beyond and above all that is earthly; the feeling, that all that is earthly vanishes before them; that individual man, when compared with them in the vastness of space, is so unutterably insignificant; that his fate, his joys and sorrows, upon which he sets such worth, must vanish into nothing, when measured by the vastness of these objects! And that, moreover, the stars connect all men and all ages of the earth together, that they have seen all things from the beginning, and will see all things to the end,—All this so affects me that I am lost in silent delight whenever I contemplate the starry heavens. Surely it is a sublime spectacle, when, in the stillness of night, over the whole bright region of heaven, the stars, as a chorus of worlds, march up and down, and in a certain degree divide being into two parts. The one part, that pertaining to the earthly, appears as dumb in the full stillness of the night; while the other ascends in sublimity, beauty, and glory. Again, the starry heavens, regarded in one point of view, are of great moral influence. Who could love immorality, and love such thoughts and feelings as they excite? How charming is the simple view of this most wonderful of the scenes of Nature! I have frequently thought that you would be much pleased with the study of astronomy. If you should wish it, I would willingly give you some instruction, and point out to you the proper books.

You ask me whether I have been at Burgörner alone, or with my family. We have had all our children and some other relations with us at Burgörner this summer, so that there has not been much vacant room in our rather large house. My daughter, however, came from Silesia rather late, and my youngest son left rather early, and I have not been there always. Once I was absent, having gone to fetch my daughter, and at other times I spent some days on a couple of my wife's estates. I may well say that I enjoy both the family circle and solitude. I never wish myself from the first in the second; but when I am alone, I feel my time and myself peculiarly my own. But few men can live a happier, more cheerful, more serene life with their families than I; every one is contented with me, and I with every one. Unanimity ever reigns throughout my family, which never suffers any disturbance except from sickness. Little, therefore, can be said of this portion of my life, for it is marked by few incidents. Of sickness, God be praised, we have known but little. My wife, indeed, has suffered much at times, but has been enabled by the great strength of her mind to restrain the outward signs of sickness, and for some time past has been in really good health. My daughter and her husband are staying with us here at present, but my eldest son and his wife have returned to Silesia, to which place my two daughters will soon follow them. So much for my material life. From my habit of saying but little in letters of my outward circumstances, has arisen the cause of my neglecting to say whether I were alone or not. Circumstances only interest me as they are the sources of thoughts and feelings. In conversation with my family, even, I say but little more than I am obliged respecting my own and others actions. It has ever appeared to me a sign of poverty of ideas, when a man fills his letters or his conversation with narrations of events or circumstances; and it

has never been my opinion that communications of joy and sorrow are necessary to friendship. This is called friendship, and may, perhaps, be friendship, but there is, God be praised, a higher, nobler, and purer species, which needs not such food, because it has a more excellent nourishment.

You will receive in a few days, dear Charlotte, the engravings which I have so long promised you, and which, with the plans and explanations, will give you a tolerable idea of the character of my most usual residence. They belong to an architectural work, and I could not, until very lately, procure them singly. I have re-perused your last letter, and one passage, which has peculiarly pleased me, I have read very frequently. What truly beautiful, and even exalted ideas, are connected with our tender and long-enduring friendship! The most striking of its circumstances is, that you have preserved the affection which you felt for me in the days of your youth in your more advanced years. Among so many earthly changes, this friendship has been a sign of durability, or, as one might even say, of eternity; or, on the other side, of the firm endurance of the unchangeable; of the honour paid to what is truly excellent in the worthy idea of a higher good; in the casting away of all little contracted notions. For that narrow-heartedness, which one so often meets, and wherein he who nourishes it, finds his greatest satisfaction, proves the sensuality of the feelings of those who need to place themselves behind such a screen. That love which remains true to its lofty origin, is as genial and bright as the sun; exalting the soul in faith and hope. Our finite and imperfect trust and faith, have already obtained for us many benefits; and it is an exalting and inspiring hope, that we shall find hereafter in a higher sphere those heavenly gifts which have already blessed us so highly in this. Ever be convinced, dear Charlotte, of my unchangeable affection. Yours, H.

LETTER LIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, October* 30, 1825.

I write only a few lines to-day, to accompany the engravings of Tegel, which I send you. The destination of particular rooms is partly shown by the plan. I live in that which is described as the library, and in the cabinets facing the garden. The rest of the ground-floor is occupied with offices. On the first-floor is a lofty staircase, as is represented in the print. The dining-room is over the kitchen. On the opposite side of the house, in the round building at the back of the court, is my sleeping-room. The remaining apartments of this story are those of my wife and unmarried daughter, and the parlour. The second story is occupied by my children; and when there are more at home than it will accommodate, we find room for them on the first-floor.

Farewell! yours as ever, H.

LETTER LIV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, November* 8, 1824.

You will have received by this time the engravings which I sent you, and must, I know, have been pleased with them. They are so exact that if you look them over carefully you will be able to form a very good notion of the house. It is a place which I love very much, but at which I have lived

very little. I resided there, for instance, only four months last year. I have reasons for making the town my place of residence in the winter, although my wife and I would much prefer the country. And in summer the affairs of my other estates compel, or at least render it very advisable, that I should visit them. Thus it is, that those who are apparently quite free are sometimes slaves. I am attached to Tegel for many reasons, among the chief of which are the antiquities in marble, and copies of antiquities in plaster, which adorn the rooms. A sense of the beauties of sculpture is productive of the purest and noblest enjoyment, and one is very loth to be without the presence of those objects which excite in the mind pleasurable sensations which are undecaying. Charming as is the beauty of the living human frame, it bears no comparison with that of the antique statues. For the enjoyment of this pleasure no extraordinary knowledge is required, nothing, in fact, but an unrepressed sense of the beautiful. The beauty of a work of art is, for the very reason that it is a work of art, much freer from imperfections than nature, and never excites selfish or sensual emotions. We observe it attentively, we wonder at it more and more, but we do not form any connection between it and ourselves. To the beauty of sculpture applies what Göethe has said so finely of the stars,—"We never desire the stars, although we take such pleasure in their light." You will remark amongst the statues on the ground floor, the image of a woman without head or arms. This is no longer in that part of the house, but is placed in my library. I have had it a long time, even when I was in Rome. It is one of the most perfect antique statues which exist, and there could scarcely be a finer representation of female beauty. All the figures which are drawn as in the hall are now in my library, except the round vase in the middle. You will, doubtless, have wondered what this is, and certainly will not have guessed

rightly. It is an antique marble fountain cup, and the bas-relief round it represents a Bacchanalian festival, and even now is dented with the marks of the buckets. Heaven knows by what means it could come into a monastery. The legend says, that it was the fountain in which the holy Pope Calixtus suffered martyrdom, and its waters were considered to possess a healing power. However that may be, the Pope wished to sell the vase, and I bought it of him. I had some trouble in obtaining permission to bring it from Rome. But I obtained it at last by means of my friendship with his Holiness. In the hall over my library are three beautiful columns of an extraordinarily fine marble, and a Medusa's head in porphyry, which were given to me by the Pope. The most delicate of my antiques, a little draped figure of a nymph, stands in a niche in the saloon. I trouble you, dear Charlotte, with these details, because they will all help to give you a better idea of the interior of my house. I have no paintings here, such as I possess being at Berlin.

I have been very glad to find, as I do from your last letter, that you have recovered that calm, trusting tone of mind which is so peculiarly your own. Sedulously preserve it, and never again allow yourself to become a prey to vexatious thoughts. I know well that this is easier said than done, and feel that your position is at present far from what it should be, but as long as you possess your fair and singular feeling of content, you possess that which must ever exalt and satisfy. You are able to say, moreover, that all the good of your present position is the result of your own exertions, your own unassisted efforts. The decision of character, the talents and activity which must have been developed by these means, are a further reward in themselves, of a perfectly distinct species from the reward of their results. My constant thought, however, is, that your whole being requires another kind of occupation.

We should always be careful to recollect that outward circumstances give peculiarities to the mind which may appear totally heterogeneous, but which would, nevertheless, have scarcely been developed without them! I am glad that you have found means to obtain more of that repose of which you stand in so much need. The wants of our inner being are more difficult to bear than those of our material life.

You wish my opinion on Walter Scott, and ask me to direct you in your reading. It is difficult for me to give you advice on this subject. I read but little German, and such books as I do read are of a kind which would be useless to you: I am therefore but a bad guide for your studies. You remark that, in spite of the fashion, you cannot relish Scott's romances. That the robber, prison, and hostelry scenes, with the terrible creations of his fancy, leave an unpleasant impression on your mind; that a couple of his romances have not given you a single exalted idea; and you conclude by prophesying for his novels an existence of no longer duration than the works of Lafontaine. If I cannot altogether agree with you in this, I certainly will not offer a contrary opinion. I have, however, read some of them with my wife in the evening, and have been much pleased with them; I can especially recommend to you the Astrologer, the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, and Ivanhoe. There is in these romances a most excellent truth of colouring, and delicacy in the delineation of character, and they possess the further attraction of containing many historical details, exact representations of the manners and customs of the various periods which they describe. I always like history in the shape of readings, and I often think that, if I should have the misfortune, which people who have used their eyes much frequently have, of losing my sight entirely, or almost entirely, I would have histories read aloud to me. Ancient history interests me more than modern, but if you prefer the latter, you will find a crowd of

amusing memoirs in the French literature of late years. I have read few of them myself, but have heard that they are, as one would naturally imagine, very interesting. I look forward with great pleasure to the continuation of your biography. Allow me to repeat, dear Charlotte, the hearty assurance of my unvarying affection. Yours, H.

LETTER LV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, December* 1, 1825.

For the continuation of your biography, which I have received and read since my last letter, receive my most hearty thanks. It has interested me equally with the preceding portion, and renewed the pleasure which I took in that. The period of which you now treat is the most interesting in a woman's life, and the more so in this case, that it is peculiarly wanting in what are usually called incidents. But the upward growth of a human being, the development of his mind and soul, with their various properties and peculiarities, proceeding from, and connected with, each other, are all circumstances which possess for him, who knows how rightly to value and understand them, a greater interest than any of the chances of outward life, which are after all nothing but disturbances. And this train of inward circumstances, so to speak, is pourtrayed so simply and naturally in this portion of your biography, that it is manifestly the work of a bold and delicate hand. By this I am enabled to see you as you used to be, to become acquainted with your circumstances, and to trace, in a most interesting point of view, days now long since gone by. The

delight which I take in your representations of persons who are strangers to me, proves the sympathy between us; and let me repeat my lively and hearty thanks for the great pleasure which I have felt in this perusal of the last portion of your biography which you have sent me. Among the sketches which you have given, was one which particularly pleased me; I allude to that of your former friend, Henrietta L——. And all which relates to her, your unobserved connection, and your visible life, increases the interest of this narrative, in proportion as the interest which your attachment to her, and as the influence which she exercised upon you, was enduring. It is, however, very delightful to think, that this was not so much an influence of the kind, which a friend who is such by nature, or, who has become so in the intercourse of society, exercises; but one created by the sentiments which you entertained for the person herself. You have greatly wondered that such an affection and confidence should have sprung up between you two, whose dispositions were so different. It is, however, very clear, that one cause of your love for your friend, and the delight which you took in her company, was the romance attached to a clandestine intimacy, and the efforts which you were forced to make to keep it secret; and another, the influence which your friend's beauty had upon your mind and spirit. But I believe, with you, that its real and chief cause was pure womanly love. The longing for friendship is common to the youth of both sexes; and when it does not meet with fit objects, it melts away into other feelings of a like nature, imparting to them its hue, rather than receiving theirs. The origin of your estimation of a friend, as one of the greatest joys of life, was no doubt your early perusal of Clarissa, which filled your mind with an ideal to be realised by Henrietta.

It must have been difficult for friendship to connect you

two; for it ever demands unity of character in respect to the main points, and it is almost vain for persons so obviously different as you describe your friend and yourself to have been, to become, or at least to remain, very much attached. And this is a more unusual occurrence when the parties are of equal age, as you were, for then the one feels in her soul a necessity to submit to the other as the superior. Love, however, receives not its impression so much from the object itself, as from that object clothed in the splendour which is most agreeable to its fancy. What you saw in the features, in the being of your friend, existed, perhaps, in her real disposition, but was modified by you as it came into action, and at length acquired a species of magical power, which was in fact the birth of your own sentiment. There is something peculiarly touching in the delight which the mind experiences in watching the object of its love asleep. But there is much that is characteristic in sleep. How charming is the graceful sleep of infants; how angelic their slumbers! How sad and terrible the expression of a conscience-troubled sleeper! Farewell! With the tenderest affection, yours, H.

LETTER LVI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, December* 25, 1825.

Since I dispatched my last letter I have received two from you, one dated the 6th, and the other the 20th of this month, for which I heartily thank you. I am glad to find that you are pleased with the engravings of Tegel, but had neither wished nor expected that the mansion should appear to you a stately castle. The old building which, as you will have

observed, is less than the modern, was the hunting-lodge of the great elector. It afterwards came into my family. This place, on account of its smallness, and because there is a village of Tegel, in which I have no property, was commonly called little Tegel castle. It is only lately that the people, much against my wishes, have begun to call it a castle. In Silesia, indeed, I have really a large old castle, with its towers and moats; but that place I call a mansion. This, however, is a very good and convenient residence, for which I must thank the architect, to whom I left all the arrangements. And one of the chief merits of the house, in my opinion, is, that I had nothing to do with its construction.

We have arrived at the close of the year! Of a year which with me has passed happily enough, but too swiftly to allow me to perform much which I had proposed at its commencement. That I ever think of you with the most hearty affection, and especially at the close of the year, you already know. Before all things, I wish that you may be preserved during the next from the ill health which attacks you so frequently, and retain the serenity of your mind. Be assured of my unvarying sympathy, and the continuance of that affection which you value so highly. It is my earnest desire to serve you to the utmost of my ability, and it would give me inexpressible pleasure if you would confide in me even more trustfully than you do at present. You will ever find me the same.

I have complained to you of the swiftness of the flight of time, which troubles me in respect to my occupations, but in every other point of view, is a matter of indifference. I have no aversion to old age, and from my youth I have been able, by the aid of my peculiar disposition, to regard the stroke of death, not merely as an ordinary event, which could not possibly cause sorrow, but even as something joyful. I have long since closed my account with the world. I have no reason

for wishing the continuance of my life; I have laid no plans for the future; I receive fortune's gifts thankfully, but should be very foolish to depend on their continuance. My thoughts and feelings are the circle in which I live, beyond which I need scarcely anything, and which are too peculiarly my own ever to desert me. No one may draw aside the veil which Providence, in its infinite wisdom, has hung before the future. It is only given to the soul to gain a freedom, a clearness of perception of the deep and the exalted, a warmth and purity of feeling, for the riches and beauty of the surrounding world. A single glance at the immeasurable distance of the starry heavens imparts to me a feeling associated with a sense of inward strength, of which he only can form a notion who has himself experienced it; and thus the close of life, so long as it is free from sickness and pain, which may attack even childhood and youth, appears to me as the fairest and most cheerful period of existence.

I very much fear that the shortness of the days at this season of the year, renders it necessary that you should double your exertions. At any rate, dear Charlotte, spare your eyes. Do not work late at night, and ever remember that it causes me great uneasiness that you, who are fitted for so different a position, should have to work so hard for your subsistence. That you never complain distresses me the more. I wish that you could find leisure to think on your biography, which gives me such real pleasure. You thought when you began your sketches that they would never end, but you have already finished those which relate to the period of your childhood, and if by-and-by you continue the work with diligence, it will soon be concluded.

* * * * *

You say that you wish my opinion and views on many important sentiments and ideas. I shall give them with

great pleasure. Express without reserve your thoughts and feelings.

Remember me at the close of the year, and be sure that I ever think of you with unvarying sympathy and affection.

Yours, H.

LETTER LVII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, February* 14, 1826.

Many thanks for your long and copious letter of the 25th and 29th of January. It has given me especial pleasure, and I wish, therefore, to give you in return especial thanks. Your writing expresses that warm and trustful affection which I value so highly, and is composed moreover in that calm and gentle spirit which I so earnestly wish to be yours. My love for calmness and gentleness is not merely a peculiarity of my disposition, or the natural consequence of my years, but is founded on the simple fact that where it is disturbed the harmony of life vanishes. I allude to that harmony of spirit, which is the necessary condition and only true foundation of a happy life, and the want of which, whether caused by sorrow, uneasiness, or any other mental pain, is certain to be followed by the same unhappy consequences.

There is a trace of earthliness in all passion, but I am yet far from condemning it unreservedly, if it proceed from the depths of the spirit, and have a good cause. I may perhaps give the sunset view of life; but mine has never been a sorrowful spirit, for it very early became my maxim to vanquish all my sorrows by strength of will, however difficult the attempt. But let this be as it may, I consider tranquillity,

and the feelings which flow from it, as always happier and more beneficent than agitation, whatever its origin; and taking, as I do, so deep an interest in your happiness, the disposition which your letters express in this respect is peculiarly gratifying.

You have not mentioned in your last letter, dear Charlotte, whether it is your intention to proceed with your biography. I hope it may. I repeat my so often repeated wishes on this subject. I shall read, whatever you may write of it, with great interest and lively pleasure, but sincerely hope that you will not allow it to weary you, or touch upon unpleasant reminiscences. You are not quite right in saying that I commenced this correspondence with you, for the sake of gaining a thorough knowledge of your character. I always love to occupy my thoughts with the past, and the recollection of you as you used to be, of our early correspondence and acquaintance, was sufficient reason for its renewal. It is, however, very certain that the sympathy and affections proceeding from our correspondence have been much exalted and increased by the openness with which you have disclosed to me the workings of your spirit as well as the chances of your life. For the manner in which you have done this you have my hearty thanks, and you will certainly continue to receive them to the end. But I will also assert generally, that when a man has learned thoroughly the feelings, thoughts, and affections of another, many inconsistencies disappear, and much which, viewed alone, he would condemn, or strongly disapprove of, becomes bearable or even perfectly blameless.

You say that you have tried the water-cure, but not to its full extent. This I can well believe, for it is too terribly painful, as I have been assured, and as indeed is manifest, to be pursued by many people to its perfection. It consists, you say, in drinking water as hot as it can be borne, at very short

intervals. I should like to have an exact account of the quantity to be drunk, of the length of the intervals, and of your sensations whilst taking the draughts. I have already learned with sorrow from your letters, that its good effects on the state of your health were but temporary. I am convinced that it is a very effective mode of treatment, and have heard of many cases in which it overcame deeply-seated maladies. But I am, nevertheless, very far from asserting that it is fit for every disease.

You remark that a certain call is not altogether incredible. For my own part I have never been subject to this superstition, but I know that it is very old and generally received as truth. You may name me happy without filling me with evil presentiments. I only mentioned that the well-known superstition had occurred to my recollection. It is founded on ideas which lie very deep. Boasting, especially when a man boasts of his own good fortune, is regarded as a sign of forgetfulness of the instability of human affairs, of a disregard of modesty and humility. And therefore it is, that the changes from good to bad fortune, which are of such frequent occurrence, are regarded by many as punishments; and on this account also it is, that persons of timid disposition are very anxious to conceal, or at least to say very little of any good fortune which may happen to them, that they may forget as much as possible the change which may some day take place. The superstitious dislike of congratulation from others is founded on the fear of envy and insincerity, or a doubt whether this congratulation may not have some malicious purpose in view. From such causes it is that congratulation has come to be regarded as an ill omen, and that talismans have been invented. The whole must vanish before the truth of religion, or even common sense. He who addresses himself from pure delight at his own or another's happiness with gratitude to its author, is certainly doing that which is

well pleasing to God, and guards himself thereby against any unhappy change of circumstances in the way of punishment, unless, indeed, such a change should arise from the inscrutable designs of Providence. It is a still nobler feeling to rejoice at the happiness of another without envy, and gratefully to receive our own as an undeserved gift.

I learn from your letter that you intended sending me a letter by to-day's post; but as I cannot receive it until after three days, I think that you would rather that I should not retain this till then. I should like to hear something of your occupations. You know what an interest I feel in all which concerns you, and how much pleasure I take in the least details. Pray write to me on the 28th January. Farewell! With unchangeable affection, yours, H.

LETTER LVIII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Berlin, March* 3, 1826.

Your two letters, one of the 13th and another of the 26th of last month, lie before me awaiting an answer. You can scarcely imagine how much the quiet and trustful tone of both, being, I know, the true expression of your feelings, has delighted me. I have also been very pleased to see that your health is rather improved. It is a great thing that you have formed a second attempt to follow the course of medicine which you describe as not only very endurable but also very successful. I have known persons on whom this hot-water medicine has acted so violently as to compel them to give it up, causing with some such a flow of blood to the head as to make them fear apoplexy. But, on the other hand, I have known both men and women who, after having followed this course of medicine

for some time, have been quite cured of their sickness. I have no particular reason in asking the details of its application, my only reasons being the interest which I take in the state of your health, and my curiosity respecting a mode of cure which you mention so frequently, and respecting which I have heard so much zealous advocacy and opposition. I am perfectly satisfied with the account which you give me in your letters, for which you have my hearty thanks. The simple and regular mode of life which you now lead, and your extraordinary patience, are medicines of great efficacy in the cure of diseases. The good effect, indeed, of a regular mode of living, which can never be disturbed without disturbing the corporeal functions, is extraordinary, and proves that temperance is the best panacea. You have been guilty of one species of intemperance, that of over exertion. And it is with a lively feeling of joy that I find you at length giving yourself more leisure and some repose. The work which you have planned out for yourself is, as you rightly observe, too much for any one person. To work till one or two o'clock at night, and to begin work again at six in the morning, is excessive exertion. I generally work till one o'clock at night, (it is now near twelve), but then I sleep till eight in the morning, and employ the hours just preceding bed-time in lighter studies—with my letters, or the arrangement of my pursuits. For I always devote my mornings to those which are most important or most difficult. I have been much interested by your account of your pursuits, so well chosen under the circumstances which demanded an immediate decision, and their profits. It is extraordinary to find, as I do from the little table which you have drawn up, that your receipts have tripled in the six years, from 1820 to 1825, both years inclusive. It does great honour to your patience and activity, as well as your talents and skill. Your effort must now be to direct others rather than to exert yourself, otherwise

you will be in danger of injuring both your health and property. I make it an earnest request that you will consider this a most important point.

It is very kind and good of you to have reperused all the letters which I sent you during the past year. But I am very sorry that you should have paid any further attention to those which had displeased or distressed you. This was very unnecessary; the whole matter was a simple misunderstanding, which we should now suffer to rest. Let it always console you, that, in respect to you, my love and sympathy is and ever will be the same. Without reproaching you, I must yet say, that your letters have shown how much and how frequently you suffered on this account, which greatly pained me, although very gratifying as a proof of friendship. Always reckon on my sympathy, my readiness to serve you, for caprice and passion are as foreign to my years as they have ever been to my character. As I love you now, I shall love you ever. I see with emotion that you have not yet ceased to grieve lest some of your expressions should have caused me pain. They have not, and if you wish to give me a proof of your attachment, let it be that you never mention such a thing again. You may be as open with me as you please, I shall ever counsel you in little as well as important matters to the best of my ability, as may seem most conducive to your welfare. I make the chief end of our correspondence the free communication of our ideas, whether they agree or disagree. A correspondence is always more perfect as it is less occupied with circumstances, and more with thoughts and feelings. I am however far from pretending to be always right, and where I think that I am, I have no wish that you should think so, or conceal opposition. This is the rule of our connection. Do you, dear Charlotte, be careful to preserve an uninterrupted confidence, together with that calmness which is so becoming

to every age, and especially to that of a more advanced period of life.

Business takes me to Silesia for a few weeks, I cannot say exactly for how long. I pray you therefore to write to me on the 26th, directing as usual to Ottmachau, near Neise, in Upper Silesia. Farewell! With the fullest affection, yours,

H.

LETTER LIX.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Ottmachau, April* 10, 1826.

I arrived here to-day, and found your letter, which must have awaited me some time. For, although I left Berlin on the 29th of March, I had to visit many places before I could come here, my last visit being to a relation, the playmate of my youth, now a widow with two children, of whom one is married, who occupies a large castle amongst the hills. Nature and art have united to render it a beautiful place, and the time that I have been there has passed very pleasantly. The weather here has been, generally, as you say it has been in your part of the country, very wet and stormy, but the last three days have been fine, and the sun has shone to-day with a summer warmth. I left my friend at five o'clock; and as I passed out of the deep valley in which her castle is situated, I watched the sun gradually rising until his full orb gilded the peaks of the remotest hills. This evening, however, is cloudy, and indeed the great heat which we have had is not natural to the season. During the whole of last winter I was, at the most, but a couple of days in the country, and feel, therefore, my present solitude as the greater novelty. I have

none of my family, no one in the house with me but a servant, who is, besides, far from my apartments. All is as still as the grave. This does not in the least disturb me, for solitude gives greater freedom to my thoughts and feelings, and I frequently stay up late that I may enjoy the solitude of midnight as well as the loneliness of the house.

I am very well acquainted with young Rose, and like him much: he is diligent, clever, and learned; and will be, I think, a great man. I should have been very glad if he had brought your nephew with him to pay me a visit. It has ever been my maxim that a man should be always accessible, whatever his age or station; and, for my own part, I never deny myself to any one. The advantage is reciprocal—a living man is the centre of many circumstances—and we can never tell how or where they may produce their fruits. And those who are engaged in important pursuits, especially if they be at the commencement of their career, have a higher interest than others, and we willingly enter with them into lines of thought and inquiry which are quite foreign to our own pursuits or dispositions; for, regarded in their highest and most general point of view, all ideas are one; and intercourse with persons of very differently formed minds, if they have reached any of the more advanced stages of development, is eminently refreshing to the soul; and by mixing in life with men of all degrees, and thus gaining an extensive experience, we lose that narrowness of mind which seldom disappears by any other means.

You are wrong, dear Charlotte, in saying that the tone of my letters is too courteous and precise. This is by no means my feeling; and I think my last letter is sufficient proof that I make no hesitation of expressing opinions different from yours. It must be manifest to you that I wish to test your sentiments and ideas. It frequently happens that after such

a test I find our thoughts similar, and I am always anxious to express such agreement, because I not only think, but know that it gives you pleasure. The form of our correspondence is at least free from all the restraints of flattery and intention; but a wish naturally clothes itself in the shape of a request, and disagreements smooth down their abruptness and ruggedness. And this is very natural in an intercourse which is founded on a similarity of disposition. The sincere and hearty sympathy, dear Charlotte, which I take in you and all that concerns you, is sufficient security that I shall use very cordial expressions, destructive of the coldness of politeness—a coldness which I detest from the bottom of my heart, and only practise in business transactions and the polite circles. Out of these positions, for which it is very proper, I never endure such formal politeness, which is so sure a sign of something defective, something rotten. But I go farther than most men in that kind of politeness which sacrifices neither trustfulness nor cordiality. It is inborn in me; and a person who should see me with my daughters could scarcely judge, except from my use of the word "thou," that I was their father. And this proceeds neither from a want of affection nor from any other reason that I know, but simply from an inability to do otherwise.

I will now conclude. I cannot tell you at the moment how to direct your next letter. I shall remain here too short a time to receive another letter from you, and am grieved to think how long it will be before I can hear from you. I should like you to have a letter written, to send as soon as I write to you again, which will be on my arrival at Berlin, or perhaps earlier. With the most hearty sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER LX.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Glogau, May* 9, 1826.

My journey has been longer than I intended, but I am now on my return to Berlin, and write to you from hence, where I have arrived earlier than I had expected, and where I intend passing the night. It is very long since I received a letter from you, and I have been much grieved at not being able to name any place where I should have been certain to find your letters. I have been constantly changing the place of my abode, except for the fourteen days which I spent at Ottmachau, and which I could not foresee, as my business only compelled me to linger day by day. Pray, dear Charlotte, write to me on the 23rd of this month, directing to Berlin as usual, that I may receive the letter immediately on my arrival. I hope that our correspondence may never meet with such another interruption, for I am always pained when I do not hear from you frequently. I fear that this cold and cheerless weather must be very bad for your health. It has been here, I mean in Silesia, very rough and unseasonable. I hear similar complaints from persons residing at Berlin; but there has been a change for the better during the last three or four days, and to-day I have had a pleasant sunshine during my whole journey from morn till sunset. Heaven and earth were in wonderful contrast. The air was perfectly still, and the blue heavens speckled with clouds, which ever and anon obscured the sun for an instant, and then passed away. The earth had no such pleasant aspect. My journey lay across the Oder, and I travelled for an hour along its banks, which, indeed, I have but just left. Yesterday and the day before, the stream rose uncommonly high, fields were overflowed,

villages flooded, and all people in a state of great excitement, preparing dams and all sorts of defences against the water. It was a misfortune which could not have been expected, as the surface of the river, except in the very current itself, was perfectly placid. The bushes appearing above the water made a very curious sight. There has not been so great a flood since the year 1813 as this, which has been produced, it is most probable, by the sudden thawing, during the late warm weather, of the excessive quantity of snow which collected on the hills during the last unusually severe winter.

It is in this way, at least, that people generally account for this sudden and extraordinary flood, of which you will doubtless have heard from the papers. Although it occurs to me as I write, dear Charlotte, that it is very likely that you never see the papers. I am the more ready to think this, as I so seldom see them myself, not having seen one since the 29th of March, when I happened to meet with a couple. Both my domestic and mental life go on very well, without demanding that I should concern myself with the affairs of the world. We are sure to learn great events without reading the papers, and it wears out both my patience and interest to collect every little piece of news, to trace every event through its successive developments, to wade through all the occurrences of a month. In the affairs and occurrences which concern whole states, we may still trace the peculiar importance which belongs to the activity, the spirit, and the sentiments of individuals. Man is especially the middle point of the whole, and every man remains alone to the end, so that, that only which was in him, and proceeds from him, exercises any weight upon him. However many companions a man may have in the active sympathising world, he must ever make the journey which leads across the boundaries of earthly things alone; no one may accompany him. But there is in all men a feeling that we shall find in another

world those who shall die before, and after ourselves. No man of feeling can yield this sentiment, this belief, without giving up a source of much pure and exalted pleasure, which is sanctified by Holy Writ. We may indeed find it expressed in some passages as a truth strictly pertaining to the comforting doctrines of Christianity. But that makes no difference in what I before said. I believe, that is, that here upon earth, all which has any connection with other institutions, is only so far of any advantage to man as it affects him individually. All advancement in respect to education, all improvement in public affairs, the reformation of states, and of the world at large, is but an idea, till it shows its power upon individuals. And uniformly, in the very greatest events which present themselves to my notice, I ever measure their importance by the influence which they may exercise upon men's personal and individual condition.

The only result of the generality of the circumstances is, that they effect much, or affect many; and of their vastness, that they set in motion extraordinary powers. In this way it is that the individual life is connected with the life of the world. That which one may find in this or that private man, may be found in every man, only proceeding from other sources, and directed to other ends. The stage only is different, the drama and the scenery are the same. By viewing them in this manner, public events have for me a higher and more lively interest. But this is a mode of viewing them, seldom or never practised in the newspapers. With respect to re-union of friends after death, I may mention a very touching verse which I met with in a country churchyard a few days since:— A woman, who had been both a mother and grandmother, was represented as praying with and for her children and grandchildren; and her prayer concluded with the words:—

"Preserve them God from every pain,
That we may meet in peace again."

An expression which is exceedingly naïve and touching, and which, as it is most probably from some old hymn-book, so much more beautiful than the modern, you have doubtless heard already. I have a great affection for grave-yards, and willingly never pass one without visiting it. I am especially fond of those which are planted with large old trees, and even one such is a great charm. The sight of the fresh blooming life unites so beautifully with the thought of the dead slumbering beneath. The most beautiful churchyard of this kind which I have seen, was one in Königsberg, in Prussia, in which there are long avenues of large and beautiful lime-trees. I passed part of the year 1809 in Königsberg, and spent a lovely summer afternoon in wandering about this cemetery. The burial-ground at Rome for strangers who are not Catholics, also, is very pretty, being further adorned with an ancient pyramid and tomb, which happen to be within its enclosures.

I shall remain but a short time at Berlin, being anxious to get to Tegel, partly because I love the place and its neighbourhood, and partly on account of its unbroken solitude. One can do but little on a journey, and while changing one's residence. Our occupations, then, are peculiarly adverse to literary employments. Farewell! with hearty sympathy and unchangeable affection, yours, H.

LETTER LXI.

Berlin.

I HAVE been very well but very busy, and have at length brought to a conclusion a work which has occupied me for years. I have already laid down my plans for the future, but will now devote to you the first leisure time which I have had for years.

The weather is singularly beautiful for our northern clime; it has a healthful influence on mind and body, and inclines the soul to contemplation. It is a very enviable privilege of southern climes, that there men ever enjoy a genial atmosphere, but in other respects, perhaps, it is not so advantageous, and must even be, I think, hurtful to the mind. For being free, as they are, from the unpleasantness of winter, they want also the pure pleasure which we experience on the return of spring. It naturally affects the soul; and if a man can bring himself to believe, as I do, that every deeply-seated feeling has its origin in the impressions of visible nature on our spirits, he must then think also that feelings and sentiments cannot strike root so deeply in the hearts of southern people as in ours, who every year behold the fresh and glowing form of nature spring from the dull rigidity of winter. And this, most probably, is the cause of the deep contrasts, the masses of shade, the masses of light, which are the peculiar features of our poetry, of that earnestness and depth of feeling which ever live in this obscurity, in this tendency to flee from the light of outward nature to the privacy and solitude of the inward soul. The strength of feeling and passion, which in the poetry of other lands burn as living fire, in ours are a fire also, but a fire which rather smoulders than flames, and effects

great purposes slowly. These feelings are fed by the more earnest longings, with which we are led by the comparative harshness of our clime, to look forward to that paradise which is promised to us as a more enduring abode than the one which we now inhabit. And thence proceeds another great longing which few men are without, and which is especially strong in men who think much and deeply. For however much we may love this earth, and totally ignorant as we are of the appearance of the other worlds of the creation, we cannot help feeling that nature must, in those worlds, be fairer and more richly endowed, than she is with us. With this may be connected the feeling that we would not willingly leave our present abode for another. We may there, indeed, find a compensation for things of which we must be deprived by death, but in this is implied the confession that we have loved that which is less beautiful, or, at least, valued it equally with that which is of a higher nature, and cannot for the moment separate our desires from that which is the lower. This is common to both the German and English poets, and has the same origin in either. It is similar, to compare great things with small, to the longing after a more intellectual existence which is common to all noble spirits, although they would not be willing to resign life at any particular moment.

One-sidedness is altogether relative, and we have reason to fear its influence over a man who seeks to direct his attention to too great a multitude of objects. But women are so fortunate, we may truly say fortunate, as to be able to remain strange to many things. They are for the most part gainers thereby, since they thus contract the circle of their sentiments, so as to give them greater depth, and thus one-sidedness is not with them so injurious as with men. I remember two women of my acquaintance, who avoided as far as possible entering into society, and remained in such retirement, not on account

of any unhappiness, but from simple inclination, so that it was with the greatest unwillingness that they entered into the company of a single stranger; and certainly they lost none of their interest by this reserve.

You allude with sorrow to many vices in their relations and consequences, and desire my opinion on the subject. I acknowledge that I neither admire nor approve of that notion, according to which morality is split into a certain number of virtues, which are opposed to the same number of vices. Such a system appears to me false and unnatural.

I cannot say whether I hate most, the proud, the avaricious, the extravagant, or the voluptuous. It all depends on individual circumstances. In judging men, I always look to their dispositions as the groundwork of all their thoughts, determinations, and actions. As this may be good or evil, noble or ignoble, I make my decision. If two or three men have, in the same degree, ignoble, selfish, low dispositions, it matters little in what particular view these qualities may find expression. One vice may be more inconvenient or injurious than another, but they are all of them equally bad and pitiful. It is the same with virtues. One man may be entirely free from immorality, and possess many good qualities, whilst another may err in many points, as, for example, in being proud, or of a violent temper; but I should yet, if the latter had the nobler disposition, very much prefer him to the former. Two points, however, have to be considered; that is, the idea according to which, and from which, the individual becomes good, and that power of the will through which he confirms this idea against the freedom or the passions of his nature. Pitiful men are those who have no power over themselves, who, when they continue virtuous, continue so from low motives, from a regard for their happiness and ease, from a dread of the stings of conscience, and future punishment. It is certainly very good

and useful that men should be preserved from sin even by such considerations as these, but we cannot regard such dispositions with pleasure. That spirit only is noble which acts virtuously for virtue's sake, from a feeling of duty, from a conviction of her exalted worth, from a true perception of her unequalled beauty. Such motives as these alone prove a disposition great and noble, and have a beneficial influence on the disposition itself. And if, as is ever the case with truly amiable spirits, religion is one of them, their good effects are twofold. Religion cannot either be gained and understood in its true greatness by low minds. He who serves God from selfish motives only, for the sake of his protection, help, or blessing; or that he may be at liberty to require Him to trouble himself about every single circumstance of his life, again makes himself the centre point of all. But he who, embued with a deep sense of the great and fatherly goodness of God, regards him with unspeakable admiration and gratitude, he who dismisses from his mind everything inconsistent with the thought that the demands of duty and virtue are for the furtherance of the Divine will, for the furtherance of the plans which God has laid down for the government of the world, he has a truly religious and virtuous spirit.

Farewell, with unchangeable, ever sympathising affection,

Yours, H.

LETTER LXII.

DEAR CHARLOTTE, *Tegel, September* 10, 1826.

I have received with great pleasure your letter, and the continuation of your biography. Short as they are, they treat of a most eventful period, and I have read them with much interest.

You have before told me, that when we first became acquainted at Pyrmont you were already secretly betrothed. This greatly surprised me, as I had not the least suspicion of such a thing. The circumstances of your union were very remarkable. In spite of what we think or say, it appears, as you rightly remark, that an eternal fate, which none may oppose, determines our individual destiny. I am quite of your opinion that it is by no means certain that that providence, which is commonly called good and bad fortune, is worthy of much consideration. The less happy our outward lot, the more comforting and exalting it is to think ourselves worthy of a higher species of cultivation. In such fortunes as yours, the hand of fate is wonderfully manifest. To many actions we are hurried on by some inward incomprehensible impulse, and so far from being influenced with respect to them by outward circumstances, we feel that it would be better if others would assist us to avoid that end towards which we feel thus irresistibly drawn. You did little in reality to involve yourself in this fate: you simply, out of love to your friend, resigned yourself to its dispensation. It is very frequently the case that persons who do not love, or who may even dislike each other, are married, for reasons and on account of feelings which should never be allowed to take part in such a matter, however innocent they may be in themselves. Such marriages are to me, indeed, almost incom-

prehensible, for I cannot, for a single instant, entertain the idea of marrying any person whom I did not at the time feel to be the only person with whom I could enter into such a connection. I cannot, for a single instant, entertain the idea of marrying a woman for whom I felt only respect and friendship, and not those profound, ardent sentiments, which are commonly called love. It is only in marriages sanctified by these higher feelings, that the affections remain unto the grave the same as they were at first.

It is, however, a very good thing that all people have not the same views. Did they think as I do, there could be very few marriages at all; whereas many are happy, which were at first marked by coldness and indifference. In respect to yours, it is very manifest that you were influenced by your love for your friend, by the best feelings of the human heart; and that the best, the noblest, and most unselfish feelings may lead to the most unhappy results. It is as if by some lofty and wise dispensation, the outward fates were brought into conflict with the inner sentiments, in order that the latter might receive a higher worth, shine in sublimer purity, and become, by privation and suffering, dearer to him who is so happy as to possess them. However benevolent the government of Providence may be, its beneficence cannot be always and uniformly exhibited in the prosperity of particular men. It has ever a higher end, and operates rather upon the inner sentiments and feelings of our nature.

The account of the ghostly warning which you give is very wonderful. You received it, you say, when you first gave your consent to the marriage which caused you so much sorrow. And even more wonderful was the intimation of your mother's death at the same moment.

It is impossible to deny that you did, indeed, hear some voice. And it is quite as certain, from the total solitude and

loneliness of your situation at the time that it was the voice of no living being. It was a voice which sounded within your own spirit, although you seemed to hear it with your outward ears. There are many who would pronounce it only a deception of the imagination; who think that those appearances which are generally thought supernatural, are simply the result of natural causes. Such persons will admit of no connection between the spiritual and material world, and believe that he who has seen anything of the kind, has only been affected by his fancy; or the state of his blood. That this may sometimes be the case I will not deny, but I will not allow that it has never been otherwise with some men in some situations. You observe, that you have become more and more convinced of the truth of the opinion expressed by Jung-Stilling in his theory of Ghosts, (a work which I have not read), that those of our friends who have gone before, still feeling for us an earnest love, are eager to protect us, and having then a clearer vision than we, are anxious to make their presence known to us, in order to render their warning, in important and remarkable circumstances, more deeply felt. All this merely shows that they would re-enter into relation with us, while this itself must plainly depend on the freedom of our spiritual perceptions from the outward senses. In this state of freedom, to which no one can attain by his own mere will, you may probably believe yourself to have been, when, raised above all ordinary considerations, you wrote down your resolves. Your remarks are profound and feeling.

There is, doubtless, a still, secret, unearthly circle of existence perpetually surrounding us, although imperceptible and invisible; and why should not the veil be raised for an instant, and that become visible which has no trace in earthly life? Such was the case with you, the moment when you wrote down that determination which was to cause you so

much unhappiness: you were warned by the voice of one which was soon to be no more, at the moment that is so remarkably signified by the fact that your mother died at the same time eight days after. This was certainly a supernatural occurrence. It was one of those omens, which sometimes, though rarely, occur—one of those indications of a world from which our ordinary life is separated by an impassable gulf. I thank you heartily that you have not omitted to state this circumstance.

It is very manifest that you have been too anxious to satisfy your obligations. Although I honour your endurance very much, it, at the same time, causes me much sorrow; and I would willingly assist you to obtain that repose which I entreat you to take. Pray deny yourself no longer that rest of which you stand in so much need. I greatly fear that you will not be able to proceed in your undertaking much farther. To do so would need a more business-like spirit than yours; one of younger years, and younger in strength. It is surely better to allow it to remain within its present confined circle. For to-day, dearest Charlotte, adieu!

With unchangeable sympathy and affection, yours, H.

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